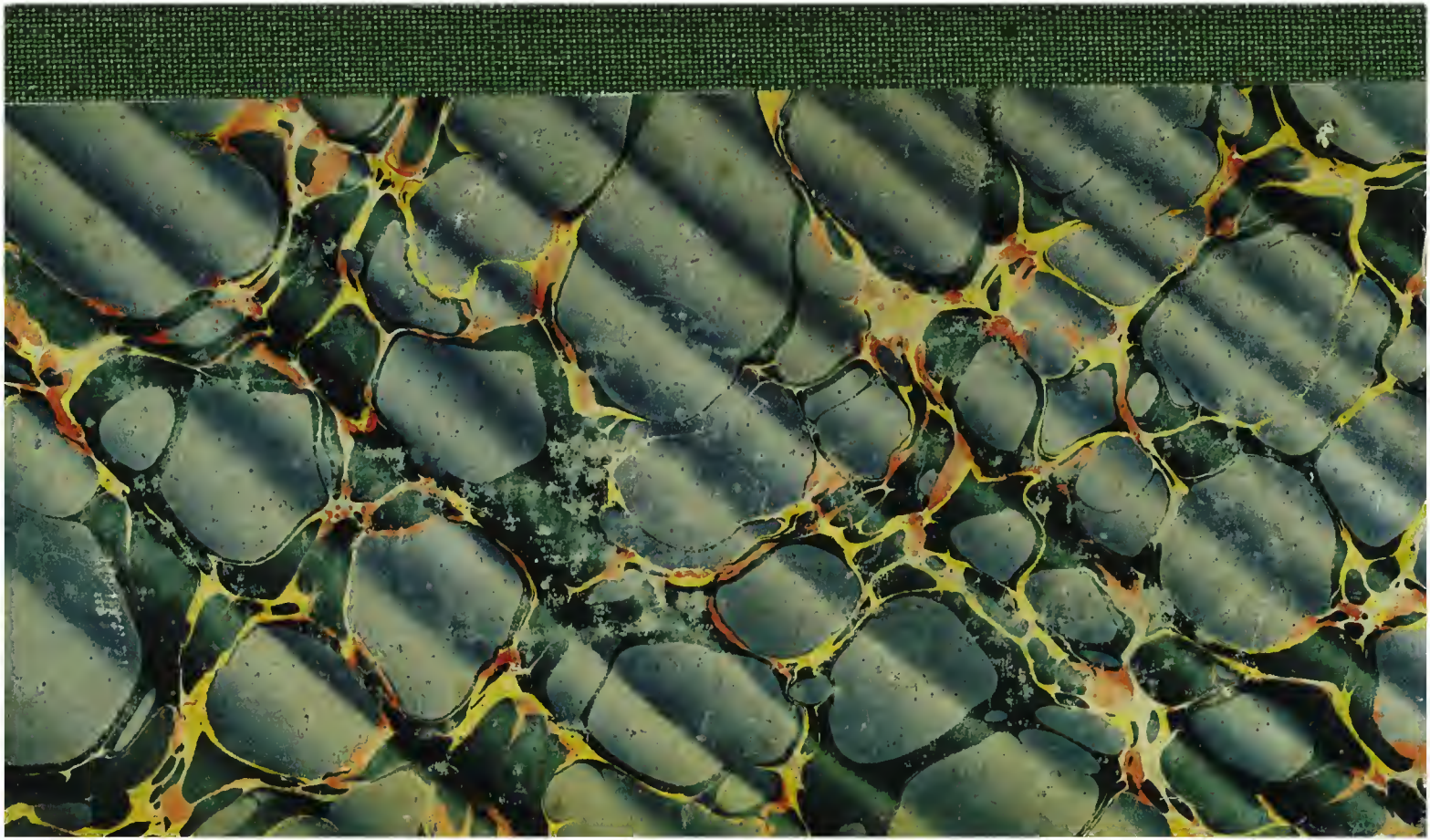

A

SERIES OF PLAYS:

IN WHICH

IT IS ATTEMPTED TO DELINEATE

THE

STRONGER PASSIONS OF THE MIND:

EACH PASSION

BEING THE

SUBJECT OF A TRAGEDY AND A COMEDY.

BY

JOANNA BAILLIE.

A NEW EDITION.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1821.

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

It is natural for a writer, who is about to submit his works to the Public, to feel a strong inclination, by some Preliminary Address, to conciliate the favour of his reader, and dispose him, if possible, to peruse them with a favourable eye. I am well aware, however, that his endeavours are generally fruitless: in his situation our hearts revolt from all appearance of confidence, and we consider his diffidence as hypocrisy. Our own word is frequently taken for what we say of ourselves, but very rarely for what we say of our works. Were the three plays which this small volume contains, detached pieces only, and unconnected with others that do not yet appear, I should have suppressed this inclination altogether; and have allowed my reader to begin what is before him, and to form what opinion of it his taste or his humour might direct, without any previous trespass upon his time or his patience. But they are part of an extensive design: of one which, as far as my information goes, has nothing exactly similar to it in any language; of one which a whole life's time will be limited enough to accomplish; and which has, therefore, a considerable chance of being cut short by that hand which nothing can resist.

Before I explain the plan of this work, I must make a demand upon the patience of my reader, whilst I endeavour to communicate to him those ideas regarding human nature, as they in some degree affect almost every species of moral writings, but particularly the Dramatic, that induced me to attempt it; and, as far as my judgment enabled me to apply them, has directed me in the execution of it.

From that strong sympathy which most creatures, but the human above all, feel for others of their kind, nothing has become so much an object of man's curiosity as man himself. We are all conscious of this within ourselves, and so constantly do we meet with it in others, that, like every circumstance of continually repeated occurrence, it thereby escapes observation. Every person who is not deficient in intellect, is more or less occupied in tracing amongst the individuals he converses with, the varieties of understanding and temper which constitute the characters of men; and receives great pleasure from every stroke of nature that points out to him those varieties. This is, much more than we are aware of, the occupation of children, and of grown people also, whose penetration is but lightly esteemed; and that conversation which degenerates with them into trivial and mischievous tattling, takes its rise not unfrequently from the same source that supplies the rich vein of the satirist and the wit. That eagerness so universally shown for

the conversation of the latter, plainly enough indicates how many people have been occupied in the same way with themselves. Let any one, in a large company, do or say what is strongly expressive of his peculiar character, or of some passion or humour of the moment, and it will be detected by almost every person present. How often may we see a very stupid countenance animated with a smile, when the learned and the wise have betrayed some native feature of their own minds! and how often will this be the case when they have supposed it to be concealed under a very sufficient disguise! From this constant employment of their minds, most people, I believe, without being conscious of it, have stored up in idea the greater part of those strong marked varieties of human character, which may be said to divide it into classes; and in one of those classes they involuntarily place every new person they become acquainted with.

I will readily allow that the dress and the manners of men, rather than their characters and dispositions, are the subjects of our common conversation, and seem chiefly to occupy the multitude. But let it be remembered that it is much easier to express our observations upon these. It is easier to communicate to another how a man wears his wig and cane, what kind of house he inhabits, and what kind of table he keeps, than from what slight traits in his words and actions we have been led to

conceive certain impressions of his character: traits that will often escape the memory, when the opinions that were founded upon them remain. Besides, in communicating our ideas of the characters of others, we are often called upon to support them with more expense of reasoning than we can well afford; but our observations on the dress and appearance of men seldom involve us in such difficulties. For these, and other reasons too tedious to mention, the generality of people appear to us more trifling than they are: and I may venture to say, that, but for this sympathetic curiosity towards others of our kind which is so strongly implanted within us, the attention we pay to the dress and manners of men would dwindle into an employment as insipid, as examining the varieties of plants and minerals, is to one who understands not natural history.

In our ordinary intercourse with society, this sympathetic propensity of our minds is exercised upon men under the common occurrences of life, in which we have often observed them. Here, vanity and weakness put themselves forward to view, more conspicuously than the virtues; here, men encounter those smaller trials, from which they are not apt to come off victorious; and here, consequently, that which is marked with the whimsical and ludicrous will strike us most forcibly, and make the strongest impression on our memory. To this sympathetic propensity of our minds, so

exercised, the genuine and pure comic of every composition, whether drama, fable, story, or satire, is addressed.

If man is an object of so much attention to man, engaged in the ordinary occurrences of life, how much more does he excite his curiosity and interest when placed in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress? It cannot be any pleasure we receive from the sufferings of a fellow-creature which attracts such multitudes of people to a public execution, though it is the horror we conceive for such a spectacle that keeps so many more away. To see a human being bearing himself up under such circumstances, or struggling with the terrible apprehensions which such a situation impresses, must be the powerful incentive, that makes us press forward to behold what we shrink from, and wait with trembling expectation for what we dread.* For though few at such a spectacle can get near enough to distinguish the expression of face, or the minuter parts of a criminal's behaviour, yet from a considerable distance will they eagerly mark

* In confirmation of this opinion I may venture to say, that of the great numbers who go to see a public execution, there are but very few who would not run away from, and avoid it, if they happened to meet with it unexpectedly. We find people stopping to look at a procession, or any other uncommon sight, they may have fallen in with accidentally, but almost never an execution. No one goes there who has not made up his mind for the occasion; which would not be the case, if any natural love of cruelty were the cause of such assemblies.

whether he steps firmly; whether the motions of his body denote agitation or calmness; and if the wind does but ruffle his garment, they will, even from that change upon the outline of his distant figure, read some expression connected with his dreadful situation. Though there is a greater proportion of people in whom this strong curiosity will be overcome by other dispositions and motives; though there are many more who will stay away from such a sight than will go to it; yet there are very few who will not be eager to converse with a person who has beheld it; and to learn, very minutely, every circumstance connected with it, except the very act itself of inflicting death. To lift up the roof of his dungeon, like the *Diable boiteux*, and look upon a criminal the night before he suffers, in his still hours of privacy, when all that disguise is removed which is imposed by respect for the opinion of others, the strong motive by which even the lowest and wickedest of men still continue to be actuated, would present an object to the mind of every person, not withheld from it by great timidity of character, more powerfully attractive than almost any other.

Revenge, no doubt, first began amongst the savages of America, that dreadful custom of sacrificing their prisoners of war. But the perpetration of such hideous cruelty could never have become a permanent national custom, but for this universal desire in the human mind to behold man in every

situation, putting forth his strength against the current of adversity, scorning all bodily anguish, or struggling with those feelings of nature which, like a beating stream, will ofttimes burst through the artificial barriers of pride. Before they begin those terrible rites they treat their prisoners kindly; and it cannot be supposed that men, alternately enemies and friends to so many neighbouring tribes, in manners and appearance like themselves, should so strongly be actuated by a spirit of public revenge. This custom, therefore, must be considered as a grand and terrible game, which every tribe plays against another; where they try not the strength of the arm, the swiftness of the feet, nor the acuteness of the eye, but the fortitude of the soul. Considered in this light, the excess of cruelty exercised upon their miserable victim, in which every hand is described as ready to inflict its portion of pain, and every head ingenious in the contrivance of it, is no longer to be wondered at. To put into his measure of misery one agony less, would be, in some degree, betraying the honour of their nation, would be doing a species of injustice to every hero of their own tribe who had already sustained it, and to those who might be called upon to do so; amongst whom each of these savage tormentors has his chance of being one, and has prepared himself for it from his childhood. Nay, it would be a species of injustice to the haughty victim himself, who would

scorn to purchase his place amongst the heroes of his nation, at an easier price than his undaunted predecessors.

Amongst the many trials to which the human mind is subjected, that of holding intercourse, real or imaginary, with the world of spirits: of finding itself alone with a being terrific and awful, whose nature and power are unknown, has been justly considered as one of the most severe. The workings of nature in this situation, we all know, have ever been the object of our most eager inquiry. No man wishes to see the Ghost himself, which would certainly procure him the best information on the subject, but every man wishes to see one who believes that he sees it, in all the agitation and wildness of that species of terror. To gratify this curiosity how many people have dressed up hideous apparitions to frighten the timid and superstitious! and have done it at the risk of destroying their happiness or understanding for ever. For the instances of intellect being destroyed by this kind of trial are more numerous, perhaps, in proportion to the few who have undergone it, than by any other.

How sensible are we of this strong propensity within us, when we behold any person under the pressure of great and uncommon calamity! Delicacy and respect for the afflicted will, indeed, make us turn ourselves aside from observing him, and cast down our eyes in his presence; but the first glance we direct to him will involuntarily be one

of the keenest observation, how hastily soever it may be checked; and often will a returning look of inquiry mix itself by stealth with our sympathy and reserve.

But it is not in situations of difficulty and distress alone, that man becomes the object of this sympathetic curiosity: he is no less so when the evil he contends with arises in his own breast, and no outward circumstance connected with him either awakens our attention or our pity. What human creature is there, who can behold a being like himself under the violent agitation of those passions which all have, in some degree, experienced, without feeling himself most powerfully excited by the sight? I say, all have experienced: for the bravest man on earth knows what fear is as well as the coward; and will not refuse to be interested for one under the dominion of this passion, provided there be nothing in the circumstances attending it to create contempt. Anger is a passion that attracts less sympathy than any other, yet the unpleasing and distorted features of an angry man will be more eagerly gazed upon by those who are no wise concerned with his fury or the objects of it, than the most amiable placid countenance in the world. Every eye is directed to him; every voice hushed to silence in his presence: even children will leave off their gambols as he passes, and gaze after him more eagerly than the gaudiest equipage.

The wild tossings of despair; the gnashing of hatred and revenge; the yearnings of affection, and the softened mien of love; all the language of the agitated soul, which every age and nation understand, is never addressed to the dull or inattentive.

It is not merely under the violent agitations of passion, that man so rouses and interests us; even the smallest indications of an unquiet mind, the restless eye, the muttering lip, the half-checked exclamation, and the hasty start, will set our attention as anxiously upon the watch, as the first distant flashes of a gathering storm. When some great explosion of passion bursts forth, and some consequent catastrophe happens, if we are at all acquainted with the unhappy perpetrator, how minutely shall we endeavour to remember every circumstance of his past behaviour! and with what avidity shall we seize upon every recollected word or gesture, that is in the smallest degree indicative of the supposed state of his mind, at the time when they took place. If we are not acquainted with him, how eagerly shall we listen to similar recollections from another! Let us understand, from observation or report, that any person harbours in his breast, concealed from the world's eye, some powerful rankling passion of what kind soever it may be, we shall observe every word, every motion, every look, even the distant gait of such a man, with a constancy and attention bestowed upon no

other. Nay, should we meet him unexpectedly on our way, a feeling will pass across our minds as though we found ourselves in the neighbourhood of some secret and fearful thing. If invisible, would we not follow him into his lonely haunts, into his closet, into the midnight silence of his chamber? There is, perhaps, no employment which the human mind will with so much avidity pursue, as the discovery of concealed passion, as the tracing the varieties and progress of a perturbed soul.

It is to this sympathetic curiosity of our nature, exercised upon mankind in great and trying occasions, and under the influence of the stronger passions, when the grand, the generous, and the terrible attract our attention far more than the base and depraved, that the high and powerfully tragic, of every composition, is addressed.

This propensity is universal. Children begin to show it very early; it enters into many of their amusements, and that part of them too, for which they show the keenest relish. It oftentimes tempts them, as well as the mature in years, to be guilty of tricks, vexations, and cruelty; yet GOD ALMIGHTY has implanted it within us, as well as all our other propensities and passions, for wise and good purposes. It is our best and most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others

we know ourselves. With limbs untorn, with head unsmitten, with senses unimpaired by despair, we know what we ourselves might have been on the rack, on the scaffold, and in the most afflicting circumstances of distress. Unless when accompanied with passions of the dark and malevolent kind, we cannot well exercise this disposition without becoming more just, more merciful, more compassionate; and as the dark and malevolent passions are not the predominant inmates of the human breast, it hath produced more deeds — O many more! of kindness than of cruelty. It holds up for our example a standard of excellence, which, without its assistance, our inward consciousness of what is right and becoming might never have dictated. It teaches us, also, to respect ourselves, and our kind; for it is a poor mind, indeed, that from this employment of its faculties, learns not to dwell upon the noble view of human nature rather than the mean.

Universal, however, as this disposition undoubtedly is, with the generality of mankind it occupies itself in a passing and superficial way. Though a native trait of character or of passion is obvious to them as well as to the sage, yet to their minds it is but the visitor of a moment; they look upon it singly and unconnected: and though this disposition, even so exercised, brings instruction as well as amusement, it is chiefly by storing up in their

minds those ideas to which the instructions of others refer, that it can be eminently useful. Those who reflect and reason upon what human nature holds out to their observation, are comparatively but few. No stroke of nature which engages their attention stands insulated and alone. Each presents itself to them with many varied connections; and they comprehend not merely the immediate feeling which gave rise to it, but the relation of that feeling to others which are concealed. We wonder at the changes and caprices of men; they see in them nothing but what is natural and accountable. We stare upon some dark catastrophe of passion, as the Indians did upon an eclipse of the moon; they, conceiving the track of ideas through which the impassioned mind has passed, regard it like the philosopher who foretold the phenomenon. Knowing what situation of life he is about to be thrown into, they perceive in the man, who, like Hazael, says, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" the foul and ferocious murderer. A man of this contemplative character partakes, in some degree, of the entertainment of the Gods, who were supposed to look down upon this world and the inhabitants of it, as we do upon a theatrical exhibition; and if he is of a benevolent disposition, a good man struggling with, and triumphing over adversity, will be to him, also, the most delightful spectacle. But though this eagerness to observe

their fellow-creatures in every situation, leads not the generality of mankind to reason and reflect; and those strokes of nature which they are so ready to remark, stand single and unconnected in their minds, yet they may be easily induced to do both; and there is no mode of instruction which they will so eagerly pursue, as that which lays open before them, in a more enlarged and connected view than their individual observations are capable of supplying — the varieties of the human mind. Above all, to be well exercised in this study will fit a man more particularly for the most important situations of life. He will prove for it the better Judge, the better Magistrate, the better Advocate; and as a ruler or conductor of other men, under every occurring circumstance, he will find himself the better enabled to fulfil his duty, and accomplish his designs. He will perceive the natural effect of every order that he issues upon the minds of his soldiers, his subjects, or his followers: and he will deal to others judgment tempered with mercy; that is to say, truly just; for justice appears to us severe only when it is imperfect.

In proportion as moral writers of every class have exercised within themselves this sympathetic propensity of our nature, and have attended to it in others, their works have been interesting and instructive. They have struck the imagination more forcibly, convinced the understanding more clearly,

and more lastingly impressed the memory. If unseasoned with any reference to this, the fairy bowers of the poet, with all his gay images of delight, will be admired and forgotten; the important relations of the historian, and even the reasonings of the philosopher, will make a less permanent impression.

The historian points back to the men of other ages, and from the gradually clearing mist in which they are first discovered, like the mountains of a far distant land, the generations of the world are displayed to our mind's eye in grand and regular procession. But the transactions of men become interesting to us only as we are made acquainted with men themselves. Great and bloody battles are to us battles fought in the moon, if it is not impressed upon our minds, by some circumstances attending them, that men subject to like weaknesses and passions with ourselves, were the combatants.* The establish-

* Let two great battles be described to us with all the force and clearness of the most able pen. In the first let the most admirable exertions of military skill in the General, and the most unshaken courage in the soldiers, gain over an equal or superior number of brave opponents a complete and glorious victory. In the second let the General be less scientific, and the soldiers less dauntless. Let them go into the field for a cause that is dear to them, and fight with the ardour which such a motive inspires; till discouraged with the many deaths around them, and the renovated pressure of the foe, some unlooked-for circumstance, trifling in itself, strikes their imagination at once; they are visited with the terrors of nature: their national pride, the honour of soldiership is forgotten;

ments of policy make little impression upon us, if we are left ignorant of the beings whom they affected. Even a very masterly drawn character will but slightly imprint upon our memory the great man it belongs to, if, in the account we receive of his life, those lesser circumstances are entirely neglected, which do best of all point out to us the dispositions and tempers of men. Some slight circumstance characteristic of the particular turn of a man's mind, which at first sight seems but little connected with the great events of his life, will often explain some of those events more clearly to our understanding, than the minute details of ostensible policy. A judicious selection of those circumstances which characterize the spirit of an associated mob, paltry and ludicrous as some

they fly like a fearful flock. Let some beloved chief then step forth, and call upon them by the love of their country, by the memory of their valiant fathers, by every thing that kindles in the bosom of man the high and generous passions: they stop; they gather round him; and goaded by shame and indignation, returning again to the charge, with the fury of wild beasts rather than the courage of soldiers, bear down every thing before them. Which of these two battles will interest us the most? And which of them shall we remember the longest? The one will stand forth in the imagination of the reader like a rock of the desert, which points out to the far-removed traveller the country through which he has passed, when its lesser objects are obscured in the distance; whilst the other leaves no traces behind it, but in the minds of the scientific in war.

of them may appear, will oftentimes convey to our minds a clearer idea why certain laws and privileges were demanded and agreed to, than a methodical explanation of their causes. An historian who has examined human nature himself, and likewise attends to the pleasure which developing and tracing it does ever convey to others, will employ our understanding as well as our memory with his pages; and if this is not done, he will impose upon the latter a very difficult task, in retaining what she is concerned with alone.

In argumentative and philosophical writings, the effect which the author's reasoning produces on our minds, depends not entirely on the justness of it. The images and examples that he calls to his aid to explain and illustrate his meaning, will very much affect the attention we are able to bestow upon it, and consequently the quickness with which we shall apprehend, and the force with which it will impress us. These are selected from animated and unanimated nature, from the habits, manners, and characters of men; and though that image or example, whatever it may be in itself, which brings out his meaning most clearly, ought to be preferred before every other, yet of two equal in this respect, that which is drawn from the most interesting source will please us the most at the time, and most lastingly take hold of our minds. An argument supported with vivid and interesting illus-

tration will long be remembered, when many equally important and clear are forgotten; and a work where many such occur, will be held in higher estimation by the generality of men, than one, its superiour, perhaps, in acuteness, perspicuity, and good sense.

Our desire to know what men are in the closet as well as in the field, by the blazing hearth and at the social board, as well as in the council and the throne, is very imperfectly gratified by real history; romance writers, therefore, stepped boldly forth to supply the deficiency; and tale writers and novel writers, of many descriptions, followed after. If they have not been very skilful in their delineations of nature; if they have represented men and women speaking and acting as men and women never did speak or act; if they have caricatured both our virtues and our vices; if they have given us such pure and unmixed, or such heterogeneous combinations of character, as real life never presented, and yet have pleased and interested us; let it not be imputed to the dulness of man in discerning what is genuinely natural in himself. There are many inclinations belonging to us besides this great master-propensity of which I am treating. Our love of the grand, the beautiful, the novel, and, above all, of the marvellous, is very strong; and if we are richly fed with what we have a good relish for, we may be weaned to forget our native and

favourite aliment. Yet we can never so far forget it, but that we shall cling to, and acknowledge it again, whenever it is presented before us. In a work abounding with the marvellous and unnatural, if the author has any how stumbled upon an unsophisticated genuine stroke of nature, we shall immediately perceive and be delighted with it, though we are foolish enough to admire, at the same time, all the nonsense with which it is surrounded. After all the wonderful incidents, dark mysteries, and secrets revealed, which eventful novel so liberally presents to us; after the beautiful fairy ground, and even the grand and sublime scenes of nature with which descriptive novel so often enchants us; those works which most strongly characterise human nature in the middling and lower classes of society, where it is to be discovered by stronger and more unequivocal marks, will ever be the most popular. For though great pains have been taken in our higher sentimental novels to interest us in the delicacies, embarrassments, and artificial distresses of the more refined part of society, they have never been able to cope in the public opinion with these. The one is a dressed and beautiful pleasure-ground, in which we are enchanted for a while, amongst the delicate and unknown plants of artful cultivation: the other is a rough forest of our native land; the oak, the elm, the hazel, and the bramble are there; and

amidst the endless varieties of its paths we can wander for ever. Into whatever scenes the novelist may conduct us, what objects soever he may present to our view, still is our attention most sensibly awake to every touch faithful to nature; still are we upon the watch for every thing that speaks to us of ourselves.

The fair field of what is properly called poetry, is enriched with so many beauties, that in it we are often tempted to forget what we really are, and what kind of beings we belong to. Who, in the enchanted regions of simile, metaphor, allegory, and description, can remember the plain order of things in this every-day world? From heroes, whose majestick forms rise like a lofty tower, whose eyes are lightning, whose arms are irresistible, whose course is like the storms of heaven, bold and exalted sentiments we shall readily receive; and shall not examine them very accurately by that rule of nature which our own breast prescribes to us. A shepherd, whose sheep, with fleeces of purest snow, browze the flowery herbage of the most beautiful valleys; whose flute is ever melodious, and whose shepherdess is ever crowned with roses; whose every care is love, will not be called very strictly to account for the loftiness and refinement of his thoughts. The fair Nymph who sighs out her sorrows to the conscious and compassionate wilds; whose eyes gleam like the bright drops of heaven;

whose loose tresses stream to the breeze, may say what she pleases with impunity. I will venture, however, to say, that amidst all this decoration and ornament, all this loftiness and refinement, let one simple trait of the human heart, one expression of passion, genuine and true to nature, be introduced, and it will stand forth alone in the boldness of reality, whilst the false and unnatural around it fade away upon every side, like the rising exhalations of the morning. With admiration, and often with enthusiasm, we proceed on our way through the grand and the beautiful images, raised to our imagination by the lofty epick muse: but what, even here, are those things that strike upon the heart; that we feel and remember? Neither the descriptions of war, the sound of the trumpet, the clanging of arms, the combat of heroes, nor the death of the mighty, will interest our minds like the fall of the feeble stranger, who simply expresses the anguish of his soul, at the thoughts of that far distant home which he must never return to again, and closes his eyes amongst the ignoble and forgotten; like the timid stripling goaded by the shame of reproach, who urges his trembling steps to the fight, and falls like a tender flower before the first blast of winter. How often will some simple picture of this kind be all that remains upon our minds of the terrifick and magnificent battle, whose description we have read with admiration? How comes it that we relish

so much the episodes of an heroick poem? It cannot merely be that we are pleased with a resting-place, where we enjoy the variety of contrast; for were the poem of the simple and familiar kind, and an episode after the heroick style introduced into it, ninety readers out of a hundred would pass over it altogether. It is not that we meet such a story, so situated, with a kind of sympathetick good will, as in passing through a country of castles and of palaces, we should pop unawares upon some humble cottage, resembling the dwellings of our own native land, and gaze upon it with affection. The highest pleasures we receive from poetry, as well as from the real objects which surround us in the world, are derived from the sympathetick interest we all take in beings like ourselves: and I will even venture to say, that were the grandest scenes which can enter into the imagination of man, presented to our view, and all reference to man completely shut out from our thoughts, the objects that composed it would convey to our minds little better than dry ideas of magnitude, colour, and form; and the remembrance of them would rest upon our minds like the measurement and distances of the planets.

If the study of human nature, then, is so useful to the poet, the novelist, the historian, and the philosopher, of how much greater importance must it be to the dramatick writer? To them it is a power-

ful auxiliary, to him it is the centre and strength of the battle. If characteristick views of human nature enliven not their pages, there are many excellencies with which they can, in some degree, make up for the deficiency: it is what we receive from them with pleasure rather than demand. But in his works, no richness of invention, harmony of language, nor grandeur of sentiment, will supply the place of faithfully delineated nature. The poet and the novelist may represent to you their great characters, from the cradle to the tomb. They may represent them in any mood or temper, and under the influence of any passion which they see proper, without being obliged to put words into their mouths, those great betrayers of the feigned and adopted. They may relate every circumstance, however trifling and minute, that serves to develope their tempers and dispositions. They tell us what kind of people they intend their men and women to be, and as such we receive them. If they are to move us with any scene of distress, every circumstance regarding the parties concerned in it, how they looked, how they moved, how they sighed, how the tears gushed from their eyes, how the very light and shadow fell upon them, is carefully described; and the few things that are given them to say along with all this assistance, must be very unnatural indeed if we refuse to sympathize with them. But the characters of the drama must speak directly

for themselves. Under the influence of every passion, humour, and impression; in the artificial veilings of hypocrisy and ceremony, in the openness of freedom and confidence, and in the lonely hour of meditation, they speak. He who made us hath placed within our breasts a judge that judges instantaneously of every thing they say. We expect to find them creatures like ourselves; and if they are untrue to nature, we feel that we are imposed upon.

As in other works deficiency in characteristick truth may be compensated by excellencies of a different kind; in the drama, characteristick truth will compensate every other defect. Nay, it will do what appears a contradiction; one strong genuine stroke of nature will cover a multitude of sins, even against nature herself. When we meet in some scene of a good play a very fine stroke of this kind, we are apt to become so intoxicated with it, and so perfectly convinced of the author's great knowledge of the human heart, that we are unwilling to suppose the whole of it has not been suggested by the same penetrating spirit. Many well-meaning enthusiastick criticks have given themselves a great deal of trouble in this way; and have shut their eyes most ingeniously against the fair light of nature for the very love of it. They have converted, in their great zeal, sentiments palpably false, both in regard to the character and situation of the per-

sons who utter them, sentiments which a child or a clown would detect, into the most skilful depictments of the heart. I can think of no stronger instance to show how powerfully this love of nature dwells within us.*

Formed as we are with these sympathetick propensities in regard to our own species, it is not at all wonderful that theatrical exhibition has become the grand and favourite amusement of every nation into which it has been introduced. Savages will, in the wild contortions of a dance, shape out some rude story expressive of character or passion, and such a dance will give more delight to their companions than the most artful exertions of agility. Children in their gambols will make out a mimick representation of the manners, characters, and passions of grown men and women; and such a pastime will animate and delight them much more than a treat of the daintiest sweetmeats, or the handling of the gaudiest toys. Eagerly as it is enjoyed by the rude

* It appears to me a very strong testimony of the excellence of our great national Dramatist, that so many people have been employed in finding out obscure and refined beauties, in what appear to ordinary observation his very defects. Men, it may be said, do so merely to show their own superior penetration and ingenuity. But granting this; what could make other men listen to them, and listen so greedily too, if it were not that they have received, from the works of Shakspeare, pleasure far beyond what the most perfect poetical compositions of a different character can afford?

and the young, to the polished and the ripe in years, it is still the most interesting amusement. Our taste for it is durable as it is universal. Independently of those circumstances which first introduced it, the world would not have long been without it. The progress of society would soon have brought it forth; and men, in the whimsical decorations of fancy, would have displayed the characters and actions of their heroes, the folly and absurdity of their fellow-citizens, had no Priest of Bacchus ever existed.*

* Though the progress of society would have given us the Drama, independently of the particular cause of its first commencement, the peculiar circumstances connected with its origin have had considerable influence upon its character and style, in the ages through which it has passed even to our day, and still will continue to affect it. Homer had long preceded the dramatick poets of Greece; poetry was in a high state of cultivation when they began to write; and their style, the construction of their pieces, and the characters of their heroes were different from what they would have been, had theatrical exhibitions been the invention of an earlier age or a ruder people. Their works were represented to an audience, already accustomed to hear long poems rehearsed at their public games, and the feasts of their gods. A play, with the principal characters of which they were previously acquainted; in which their great men and heroes, in the most beautiful language, complained of their rigorous fate, but piously submitted to the will of the gods; in which sympathy was chiefly excited by tender and affecting sentiments; in which strong bursts of passion were few; and in which whole scenes frequently passed, without giving the actors any thing to do but to speak, was not too insipid for them. Had the drama been the invention of a less cultivated

In whatever age or country the Drama might have taken its rise, Tragedy would have been the first-born of its children. For every nation has its great men, and its great events upon record; and to represent their own forefathers struggling with those difficulties, and braving those dangers, of which they have heard with admiration, and the effects of which they still, perhaps, experience, would certainly have been the most animating subject for the poet, and the most in-

nation, more of action and of passion would have been introduced into it. It would have been more irregular, more imperfect, more varied, more interesting. From poor beginnings it would have advanced in a progressive state: and succeeding poets, not having those polished and admired originals to look back upon, would have presented their respective contemporaries with the produce of a free and unbridled imagination. A different class of poets would most likely have been called into existence. The latent powers of men are called forth by contemplating those works in which they find any thing congenial to their own peculiar talents; and if the field wherein they could have worked, is already enriched with a produce unsuited to their cultivation, they think not of entering it at all. Men, therefore, whose natural turn of mind led them to labour, to reason, to refine, and exalt, have caught their animation from the beauties of the Grecian Drama; and they who, perhaps, ought only to have been our Criticks, have become our Poets. I mean not, however, in any degree to depreciate the works of the ancients: a great deal we have gained by those beautiful compositions; and what we have lost by them it is impossible to compute. Very strong genius will sometimes break through every disadvantage of circumstances: Shakspeare has arisen in this country, and we ought not to complain.

teresting for his audience, even independently of the natural inclination we all so universally show for scenes of horror and distress, of passion and heroic exertion. Tragedy would have been the first child of the Drama, for the same reasons that have made heroick ballad, with all its battles, murders, and disasters, the earliest poetical compositions of every country.

We behold heroes and great men at a distance, unmarked by those small but distinguishing features of the mind, which give a certain individuality to such an infinite variety of similar beings, in the near and familiar intercourse of life. They appear to us from this view like distant mountains, whose dark outlines we trace in the clear horizon, but the varieties of whose roughened sides, shaded with heath and brushwood, and seamed with many a cleft, we perceive not. When accidental anecdote reveals to us any weakness or peculiarity belonging to them, we start upon it like a discovery. They are made known to us in history only, by the great events they are connected with, and the part they have taken in extraordinary or important transactions. Even in poetry and romance, with the exception of some love-story interwoven with the main events of their lives, they are seldom more intimately made known to us. To Tragedy it belongs to lead them forward to our nearer regard, in all the distinguishing varieties which nearer inspection

discovers; with the passions, the humours, the weaknesses, the prejudices of men. It is for her to present to us the great and magnanimous hero, who appears to our distant view as a superior being, as a god, softened down with those smaller frailties and imperfections which enable us to glory in, and claim kindred to his virtues. It is for her to exhibit to us the daring and ambitious man, planning his dark designs, and executing his bloody purposes, marked with those appropriate characteristicks, which distinguish him as an individual of that class; and agitated with those varied passions, which disturb the mind of man when he is engaged in the commission of such deeds. It is for her to point out to us the brave and impetuous warrior, struck with those visitations of nature, which, in certain situations, will unnerve the strongest arm, and make the boldest heart tremble. It is for her to show the tender, gentle, and unassuming mind, animated with that fire which, by the provocation of circumstances, will give to the kindest heart the ferocity and keenness of a tiger. It is for her to present to us the great and striking characters that are to be found amongst men, in a way which the poet, the novelist, and the historian can but imperfectly attempt. But above all, to her, and to her only it belongs, to unveil to us the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions,

which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will, from small beginnings, brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them; those passions which conceal themselves from the observation of men; which cannot unbosom themselves even to the dearest friend; and can, oftentimes, only give their fulness vent in the lonely desert, or in the darkness of midnight. For who hath followed the great man into his secret closet, or stood by the side of his nightly couch, and heard those exclamations of the soul which heaven alone may hear, that the historian should be able to inform us? and what form of story, what mode of rehearsed speech will communicate to us those feelings, whose irregular bursts, abrupt transitions, sudden pauses, and half-uttered suggestions, scorn all harmony of measured verse, all method and order of relation?

On the first part of this task her Bards have eagerly exerted their abilities: and some amongst them, taught by strong original genius to deal immediately with human nature and their own hearts, have laboured in it successfully. But in presenting to us those views of great characters, and of the human mind in difficult and trying situations, which peculiarly belong to Tragedy, the far greater proportion, even of those who may be considered as respectable dramatick poets,

have very much failed. From the beauty of those original dramas to which they have ever looked back with admiration, they have been tempted to prefer the embellishments of poetry to faithfully delineated nature. They have been more occupied in considering the works of the great dramatists who have gone before them, and the effects produced by their writings, than the varieties of human character which first furnished materials for those works, or those principles in the mind of man by means of which such effects were produced. Neglecting the boundless variety of nature, certain strong outlines of character, certain bold features of passion, certain grand vicissitudes, and striking dramatick situations, have been repeated from one generation to another; whilst a pompous and solemn gravity, which they have supposed to be necessary for the dignity of tragedy, has excluded almost entirely from their works those smaller touches of nature, which so well develope the mind; and by showing men in their hours of state and exertion only, they have consequently shown them imperfectly. Thus, great and magnanimous heroes, who bear with majestic equanimity every vicissitude of fortune; who in every temptation and trial stand forth in unshaken virtue, like a rock buffeted by the waves; who, encompassed with the most terrible evils, in calm possession of their souls, reason upon the difficulties of

their state; and, even upon the brink of destruction, pronounce long eulogiums on virtue, in the most eloquent and beautiful language, have been held forth to our view as objects of imitation and interest: as though they had entirely forgotten that it is only for creatures like ourselves that we feel, and therefore, only from creatures like ourselves that we receive the instruction of example.* Thus passionate and impetuous warriors, who are proud, irritable, and vindictive, but generous, daring, and disinterested; setting their lives at a pin's fee for the good of others, but incapable of curbing their own humour of a moment to gain the whole world for themselves; who will pluck the orbs of heaven from their places, and crush

* To a being perfectly free from all human infirmity our sympathy refuses to extend. Our Saviour himself, whose character is so beautiful, and so harmoniously consistent; in whom, with outward proofs of his mission less strong than those that are offered to us, I should still be compelled to believe, from being utterly unable to conceive how the idea of such a character could enter into the imagination of man, never touches the heart more nearly than when he says, "Father, let this cup pass from me." Had he been represented to us in all the unshaken strength of these tragic heroes, his disciples would have made fewer converts, and his precepts would have been listened to coldly. Plays in which heroes of this kind are held forth, and whose aim is, indeed, honourable and praiseworthy, have been admired by the cultivated and refined, but the tears of the simple, the applauses of the young and untaught have been wanting.

the whole universe in one grasp, are called forth to kindle in our souls the generous contempt of every thing abject and base; but with an effect proportionably feeble, as the hero is made to exceed in courage and fire what the standard of humanity will agree to.* Thus,

* In all burlesque imitations of tragedy, those plays in which this hero is pre-eminent, are always exposed to bear the great brunt of the ridicule, which proves how popular they have been, and how many poets, and good ones too, have been employed upon them. That they have been so popular, however, is not owing to the intrinsic merit of the characters they represent, but their opposition to those mean and contemptible qualities belonging to human nature, of which we are most ashamed. Besides, there is something in the human mind, independently of its love of applause, which inclines it to boast. This is ever the attendant of that elasticity of soul, which makes us bound up from the touch of oppression; and if there is nothing in the accompanying circumstances to create disgust, or suggest suspicions of their sincerity, (as in real life is commonly the case,) we are very apt to be carried along with the boasting of others. Let us in good earnest believe that a man is capable of achieving all that human courage can achieve, and we shall suffer him to talk of impossibilities. Amidst all their pomp of words, therefore, our admiration of such heroes is readily excited, (for the understanding is more easily deceived than the heart); but how stands our sympathy affected? As no caution nor foresight, on their own account, is ever suffered to occupy the thoughts of such bold disinterested beings, we are the more inclined to care for them, and to take an interest in their fortune through the course of the play: yet, as their souls are unappalled by any thing; as pain and death are not at all regarded by

tender and pathetic lovers, full of the most gentle affections, the most amiable dispositions, and the most exquisite feelings; who present their defenceless bosoms to the storms of this rude world in all the graceful weakness of sensibility, are made to sigh out their sorrows in one unvaried strain of studied pathos, whilst this constant demand upon our feelings makes us absolutely incapable of answering it.* Thus, also, tyrants are represented as monsters of cruelty, unmixed with any feelings of humanity; and villains as delighting in all manner of treachery and deceit, and acting, upon many occasions, for the very love of villany itself; though the perfectly wicked are as ill fitted for the purposes of warning, as the per-

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them; and as we have seen them very ready to plunge their own swords into their own bosoms, on no very weighty occasion, perhaps, their death distresses us but little, and they commonly fall unwept.

* Were it not, that in tragedies where these heroes preside, the same soft tones of sorrow are so often repeated in our ears, till we are perfectly tired of it, they are more fitted to interest us than any other; both because in seeing them, we own the ties of kindred between ourselves and the frail mortals we lament; and sympathize with the weakness of mortality unmixed with any thing to degrade or disgust; and also because the misfortunes, which form the story of the play, are frequently of the more familiar and domestic kind. A king driven from his throne will not move our sympathy so strongly, as a private man torn from the bosom of his family.

fectly virtuous are for those of example.* This spirit of imitation, and attention to effect, has likewise confined them very much in their choice of situations and events to bring their great characters into action: rebellions, conspiracies, contentions for empire, and rivalships in love, have alone been thought worthy of trying those heroes; and palaces and dungeons the only places magnificent or solemn enough for them to appear in.

They have, indeed, from this regard to the works of preceding authors, and great attention to the beauties of composition, and to dignity of design, enriched their plays with much striking and sometimes sublime imagery, lofty thoughts, and virtuous sentiments; but in striving so eagerly to excel in those things that

* I have said nothing here in regard to female character, though in many tragedies it is brought forward as the principal one of the piece, because what I have said of the above characters is likewise applicable to it. I believe there is no man that ever lived, who has behaved in a certain manner on a certain occasion, who has not had amongst women some corresponding spirit, who, on the like occasion, and every way similarly circumstanced, would have behaved in the like manner. With some degree of softening and refinement, each class of the tragic heroes I have mentioned has its corresponding one amongst the heroines. The tender and pathetic no doubt has the most numerous, but the great and magnanimous is not without it, and the passionate and impetuous boasts of one by no means inconsiderable in numbers, and drawn sometimes to the full as passionate and impetuous as itself.

belong to tragedy in common with many other compositions, they have very much neglected those that are peculiarly her own. As far as they have been led aside from the first labours of a tragic poet by a desire to communicate more perfect moral instruction, their motive has been respectable, and they merit our esteem. But this praiseworthy end has been injured instead of promoted by their mode of pursuing it. Every species of moral writing has its own way of conveying instruction, which it can never, but with disadvantage, exchange for any other. The Drama improves us by the knowledge we acquire of our own minds, from the natural desire we have to look into the thoughts, and observe the behaviour of others. Tragedy brings to our view, men placed in those elevated situations, exposed to those great trials, and engaged in those extraordinary transactions, in which few of us are called upon to act. As examples applicable to ourselves, therefore, they can but feebly affect us; it is only from the enlargement of our ideas in regard to human nature, from that admiration of virtue and abhorrence of vice which they excite, that we can expect to be improved by them. But if they are not represented to us as real and natural characters, the lessons we are taught from their conduct and their sentiments will be no more to us, than those which we receive from the pages of the poet or the moralist.

But the last part of the task which I have mentioned as peculiarly belonging to tragedy, unveiling the human mind under the dominion of those strong and fixed passions, which, seemingly unprovoked by outward circumstances, will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before them, her poets in general have entirely neglected, and even her first and greatest have but imperfectly attempted. They have made use of the passions to mark their several characters, and animate their scenes, rather than to open to our view the nature and portraitures of those great disturbers of the human breast, with whom we are all, more or less, called upon to contend. With their strong and obvious features, therefore, they have been presented to us, stripped almost entirely of those less obtrusive, but not less discriminating traits, which mark them in their actual operation. To trace them in their rise and progress in the heart, seems but rarely to have been the object of any dramatist. We commonly find the characters of a tragedy affected by the passions in a transient, loose, unconnected manner; or if they are represented as under the permanent influence of the more powerful ones, they are generally introduced to our notice in the very height of their fury, when all that timidity, irresolution, distrust, and a thou-

sand delicate traits, which make the infancy of every great passion more interesting, perhaps, than its full-blown strength, are fled. The impassioned character is generally brought into view under those irresistible attacks of their power, which it is impossible to repel; whilst those gradual steps that lead him into this state, in some of which a stand might have been made against the foe, are left entirely in the shade. Those passions that may be suddenly excited, and are of short duration, as anger, fear, and oftentimes jealousy, may in this manner be fully represented; but those great masters of the soul, ambition, hatred, love, every passion that is permanent in its nature, and varied in progress, if represented to us but in one stage of its course, is represented imperfectly. It is a characteristick of the more powerful passions, that they will increase and nourish themselves on very slender aliment; it is from within that they are chiefly supplied with what they feed on; and it is in contending with opposite passions and affections of the mind that we best discover their strength, not with events. But in tragedy it is events more frequently than opposite affections which are opposed to them; and those often of such force and magnitude, that the passions themselves are almost obscured by the splendour and importance of the transactions to which they are attached. Besides being thus confined and

mutilated, the passions have been, in the greater part of our tragedies, deprived of the very power of making themselves known. Bold and figurative language belongs peculiarly to them. Poets, admiring those bold expressions which a mind, labouring with ideas too strong to be conveyed in the ordinary forms of speech, wildly throws out, taking earth, sea, and sky, every thing great and terrible in nature, to image forth the violence of its feelings, borrowed them gladly, to adorn the calm sentiments of their premeditated song. It has therefore been thought that the less animated parts of tragedy might be so embellished and enriched. In doing this, however, the passions have been robbed of their native prerogative; and in adorning with their strong figures and lofty expressions the calm speeches of the unruffled, it is found that, when they are called upon to raise their voice, the power of distinguishing themselves has been taken away. This is an injury by no means compensated, but very greatly aggravated, by embellishing, in return, the speeches of passion with the ingenious conceits, and complete similes of premeditated thought.* There are many other things

* This, perhaps, more than any thing else has injured the higher scenes of tragedy. For having made such free use of bold hyperbolical language in the inferior parts, the poet, when he arrives at the highly impassioned, sinks into total inability: or if he will force himself to rise still higher on

regarding the manner in which dramatick poets have generally brought forward the passions in tragedy, to the greatest prejudice of that effect they are naturally fitted to produce upon the mind, which I forbear to mention, lest they should too much increase the length of this discourse; and leave an impression on the mind of my reader, that I write more in the spirit of criticism than becomes one who is about to bring before the public a work, with, doubtless, many faults and imperfections on its head.

From this general view, which I have endeavoured to communicate to my reader of tragedy, and those principles in the human mind upon which the success of her efforts depends, I have been led to believe, that an attempt to write a series of tragedies, of simpler construction, less embellished with poetical decorations, less constrained by that lofty seriousness which has so generally been considered as necessary for the support of tragic dignity, and in which the chief object should be to delineate the progress of the higher passions in the human breast, each play exhibiting a particular passion, might not be unacceptable to the public. And I have been the more readily induced to act upon this idea, because I am confident, that tragedy, written upon

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the wing, he flies beyond nature altogether, into the regions of bombast and nonsense.

this plan, is fitted to produce stronger moral effect than upon any other. I have said that tragedy, in representing to us great characters struggling with difficulties, and placed in situations of eminence and danger, in which few of us have any chance of being called upon to act, conveys its moral efficacy to our minds by the enlarged views which it gives to us of human nature, by the admiration of virtue and execration of vice which it excites, and not by the examples it holds up for our immediate application. But in opening to us the heart of man under the influence of those passions to which all are liable, this is not the case. Those strong passions that, with small assistance from outward circumstances, work their way in the heart till they become the tyrannical masters of it, carry on a similar operation in the breast of the Monarch, and the man of low degree. It exhibits to us the mind of man in that state when we are most curious to look into it, and is equally interesting to all. Discrimination of character is a turn of mind, though more common than we are aware of, which every body does not possess; but to the expressions of passion, particularly strong passion, the dullest mind is awake; and its true unsophisticated language the dullest understanding will not misinterpret. To hold up for our example those peculiarities in disposition and modes of thinking which nature has fixed upon us, or which

long and early habit has incorporated with our original selves, is almost desiring us to remove the everlasting mountains, to take away the native land-marks of the soul; but representing the passions, brings before us the operation of a tempest that rages out its time and passes away. We cannot, it is true, amidst its wild uproar, listen to the voice of reason, and save ourselves from destruction; but we can foresee its coming, we can mark its rising signs, we can know the situations that will most expose us to its rage, and we can shelter our heads from the coming blast. To change a certain disposition of mind which makes us view objects in a particular light, and thereby, oftentimes, unknown to ourselves, influences our conduct and manners, is almost impossible; but in checking and subduing those visitations of the soul, whose causes and effects we are aware of, every one may make considerable progress, if he proves not entirely successful. Above all, looking back to the first rise, and tracing the progress of passion, points out to us those stages in the approach of the enemy, when he might have been combated most successfully; and where the suffering him to pass may be considered as occasioning all the misery that ensues.

Comedy presents to us men, as we find them in the ordinary intercourse of the world, with all the weaknesses, follies, caprice, prejudices, and absur-

dities which a near and familiar view of them discovers. It is her task to exhibit them engaged in the busy turmoil of ordinary life, harassing and perplexing themselves with the endless pursuits of avarice, vanity, and pleasure; and engaged with those smaller trials of the mind, by which men are most apt to be overcome, and from which he, who could have supported with honour the attack of great occasions, will oftentimes come off most shamefully foiled. It belongs to her to shew the varied fashions and manners of the world, as, from the spirit of vanity, caprice, and imitation, they go on in swift and endless succession; and those disagreeable or absurd peculiarities attached to particular classes and conditions in society. It is for her also to represent men under the influence of the stronger passions; and to trace the rise and progress of them in the heart, in such situations, and attended with such circumstances, as take off their sublimity, and the interest we naturally take in a perturbed mind. It is hers to exhibit those terrible tyrants of the soul, whose ungovernable rage has struck us so often with dismay, like wild beasts tied to a post, who growl and paw before us, for our derision and sport. In pourtraying the characters of men she has this advantage over tragedy, that the smallest traits of nature, with the smallest circumstances which serve to bring them

forth, may by her be displayed, however ludicrous and trivial in themselves, without any ceremony. And in developing the passions she enjoys a similar advantage; for they often more strongly betray themselves when touched by those small and familiar occurrences which cannot, consistently with the effect it is intended to produce, be admitted into tragedy.

As tragedy has been very much cramped in her endeavours to exalt and improve the mind, by that spirit of imitation and confinement in her successive writers, which the beauty of her earliest poets first gave rise to, so comedy has been led aside from her best purposes by a different temptation. Those endless changes in fashions and in manners, which offer such obvious and ever-new subjects of ridicule; that infinite variety of tricks and manœuvres by which the ludicrous may be produced, and curiosity and laughter excited; the admiration we so generally bestow upon satirical remark, pointed repartee, and whimsical combinations of ideas, have too often led her to forget the warmer interest we feel, and the more profitable lessons we receive, from genuine representations of nature. The most interesting and instructive class of comedy, therefore, the real characteristick, has been very much neglected, whilst satirical, witty, sentimental, and, above all, busy or circumstantial comedy, have usurped the ex-

ertions of the far greater proportion of Dramatic Writers.

In Satirical Comedy, sarcastick and severe reflections on the actions and manners of men, introduced with neatness, force, and poignancy of expression, into a lively and well-supported dialogue, of whose gay surface they are the embossed ornaments, make the most important and studied part of the work: character is a thing talked of rather than shewn. The persons of the drama are indebted for the discovery of their peculiarities to what is said of them, rather than to any thing they are made to say or do for themselves. Much incident being unfavourable for studied and elegant dialogue, the plot is commonly simple, and the few events that compose it neither interesting nor striking. It only affords us that kind of moral instruction which an essay or a poem could as well have conveyed, and, though amusing in the closet, is but feebly attractive in the Theatre.*

In what I have termed Witty Comedy, every thing is light, playful, and easy. Strong, decided

* These plays are generally the work of men, whose judgement and acute observation enable them admirably well to generalize, and apply to classes of men, the remarks they have made upon individuals; yet know not how to dress up, with any natural congruity, an imaginary individual in the attributes they have assigned to those classes.

condemnation of vice is too weighty and material to dance upon the surface of that stream, whose shallow currents sparkle in perpetual sunbeams, and cast up their bubbles to the light. Two or three persons of quick thought, and whimsical fancy, who perceive instantaneously the various connections of every passing idea, and the significations, natural or artificial, which single expressions, or particular forms of speech can possibly convey, take the lead through the whole, and seem to communicate their own peculiar talent to every creature in the play. The plot is most commonly feeble rather than simple, the incidents being numerous enough, but seldom striking or varied. To amuse, and only to amuse, is its aim; it pretends not to interest nor instruct. It pleases when we read, more than when we see it represented; and pleases still more when we take it up by accident, and read but a scene at a time.

Sentimental Comedy treats of those embarrassments, difficulties, and scruples, which, though sufficiently distressing to the delicate minds who entertain them, are not powerful enough to gratify the sympathetick desire we all feel to look into the heart of man in difficult and trying situations, which is the sound basis of tragedy, and are destitute of that seasoning of the lively and ludicrous, which prevents the ordinary transactions of comedy from becoming insipid. In real life, those who,

from the peculiar frame of their minds, feel most of this refined distress, are not generally communicative upon the subject; and those who do feel and talk about it at the same time, if any such there be, seldom find their friends much inclined to listen to them. It is not to be supposed, then, long conversations upon the stage about small sentimental niceties, can be generally interesting. I am afraid plays of this kind, as well as works of a similar nature, in other departments of literature, have only tended to increase amongst us a set of sentimental hypocrites; who are the same persons of this age that would have been the religious ones of another; and are daily doing morality the same kind of injury, by substituting the particular excellence which they pretend to possess, for plain simple uprightness and rectitude.

In Busy or Circumstantial Comedy, all those ingenious contrivances of lovers, guardians, governantes, and chambermaids; that ambushed bush-fighting amongst closets, screens, chests, easy-chairs, and toilet-tables, form a gay, varied game of dexterity and invention: which, to those who have played at hide and seek, who have crouched down, with beating heart, in a dark corner, whilst the enemy groped near the spot; who have joined their busy schoolmates in many a deep-laid plan to deceive, perplex, and torment the unhappy mortals deputed to have the charge of them, cannot be

seen with indifference. Like an old hunter, who pricks up his ears at the sound of the chase, and starts away from the path of his journey, so, leaving all wisdom and criticism behind us, we follow the varied changes of the plot, and stop not for reflection. The studious man who wants a cessation from thought, the indolent man who dislikes it, and all those who, from habit or circumstances, live in a state of divorce from their own minds, are pleased with an amusement, in which they have nothing to do but to open their eyes and behold. The moral tendency of it, however, is very faulty. That mockery of age and domestick authority, so constantly held forth, has a very bad effect upon the younger part of an audience; and that continual lying and deceit in the first characters of the piece, which is necessary for conducting the plot, has a most pernicious one.

But Characteristick Comedy, which represents to us this motley world of men and women in which we live, under those circumstances of ordinary and familiar life most favourable to the discovery of the human heart, offers to us a wide field of instruction adapted to general application. We find in its varied scenes an exercise of the mind analogous to that which we all, less or more, find out for ourselves, amidst the mixed groups of people whom we meet with in society; and which I have already mentioned as an exercise universally pleasing to

man. As the distinctions which it is its highest aim to discriminate, are those of nature and not situation, they are judged of by all ranks of men; for a peasant will very clearly perceive in the character of a peer those native peculiarities which belong to him as a man, though he is entirely at a loss in all that regards his manners and address as a nobleman. It illustrates to us the general remarks we have made upon men; and in it we behold, spread before us, plans of those original ground-works, upon which the general ideas we have been taught to conceive of mankind, are founded. It stands but little in need of busy plot, extraordinary incidents, witty repartee, or studied sentiments. It naturally produces for itself all that it requires. Characters, who are to speak for themselves, who are to be known by their own words and actions, not by the accounts that are given of them by others, cannot well be developed without considerable variety of judicious incident: a smile that is raised by some trait of undisguised nature, and a laugh that is provoked by some ludicrous effect of passion, or clashing of opposite characters, will be more pleasing to the generality of men, than either the one or the other when occasioned by a play upon words, or a whimsical combination of ideas; and to behold the operation and effects of the different propensities and weaknesses of men, will naturally call up in the mind of the spectator

moral reflections more applicable, and more impressive than all the high-sounding sentiments with which the graver scenes of Satirical and Sentimental Comedy are so frequently interlarded. It is much to be regretted, however, that the eternal introduction of love as the grand business of the Drama, and the consequent necessity for making the chief persons in it, such, in regard to age, appearance, manners, dispositions, and endowments, as are proper for interesting lovers, has occasioned so much insipid similarity in the higher characters. It is chiefly, therefore, on the second and inferiour characters, that the efforts, even of our best poets, have been exhausted: and thus we are called upon to be interested in the fortune of one man, whilst our chief attention is directed to the character of another, which produces a disunion of ideas in the mind, injurious to the general effect of the whole. From this cause, also, those characteristick varieties have been very much neglected, which men present to us in the middle stages of life; when they are too old for lovers or the confidents of lovers, and too young to be the fathers, uncles, and guardians, who are contrasted with them; but when they are still in full vigour of mind, eagerly engaged with the world, joining the activity of youth to the providence of age, and offer to our attention objects sufficiently interesting and instructive. It is to be regretted that strong

contrasts of character are too often attempted, instead of those harmonious shades of it, which nature so beautifully varies, and which we so greatly delight in, whenever we clearly distinguish them. It is to be regretted that in place of those characters, which present themselves to the imagination of a writer from his general observations upon mankind, inferiour poets have so often pourtrayed with senseless minuteness the characters of particular individuals. We are pleased with the eccentricities of individuals in real life, and also in history or biography, but in fictitious writings we regard them with suspicion; and no representation of nature, that corresponds not with some of our general ideas in regard to it, will either instruct or inform us. When the originals of such characters are known and remembered, the plays in which they are introduced are oftentimes popular; and their temporary success has induced a still inferiour class of poets to believe, that, by making men strange, and unlike the rest of the world, they have made great discoveries, and mightily enlarged the boundaries of dramatick character. They will, therefore, distinguish one man from another by some strange whim or imagination, which is ever uppermost in his thoughts, and influences every action of his life; by some singular opinion, perhaps, about politicks, fashions, or the position of the stars; by some strong unaccountable love for

one thing, or aversion from another; entirely forgetting, that such singularities, if they are to be found in nature, can no where be sought for, with such probability of success, as in Bedlam. Above all it is to be regretted that those adventitious distinctions amongst men, of age, fortune, rank, profession, and country, are so often brought forward in preference to the great original distinctions of nature; and our scenes, so often filled with courtiers, lawyers, citizens, Frenchmen, &c. &c. with all the characteristicks of their respective conditions, such as they have been represented from time immemorial. This has introduced a great sameness into many of our plays, which all the changes of new fashions burlesqued, and new customs turned into ridicule, cannot conceal.

In comedy, the stronger passions, love excepted, are seldom introduced but in a passing way. We have short bursts of anger, fits of jealousy and impatience; violent passion of any continuance we seldom find. When this is attempted, however, forgetting that mode of exposing the weakness of the human mind, which peculiarly belongs to her, it is too frequently done in the serious spirit of tragedy; and this has produced so many of those serious comick plays, which so much divide and distract our attention.* Yet we all know from

* Such plays, however excellent the parts may be of which they are composed, can never produce the same

our own experience in real life, that, in certain situations, and under certain circumstances, the stronger passions are fitted to produce scenes more exquisitely comick than any other: and one well-wrought scene of this kind will have

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strength and unity of effect upon our minds which we receive from plays of a simpler undivided construction. If the serious and distressing scenes make a deep impression, we do not find ourselves in a humour for the comick ones that succeed; and if the comick scenes enliven us greatly, we feel tardy and unalert in bringing back our minds to a proper tone for the serious. As in tragedy we smile at those native traits of character, or that occasional sprightliness of dialogue, which are sometimes introduced, to animate her less interesting parts, so may we be moved by comedy; but our tears should be called forth by those gentle strokes of nature, which come at once with kindred kindness on the heart, and are quickly succeeded by smiles. Like a small summer-cloud, whose rain-drops sparkle in the sun, and which swiftly passes away, is the genuine pathetick of comedy; the gathering foreseen storm, that darkens the whole face of the sky, belongs to tragedy alone. It is often observed, I confess, that we are more apt to be affected by those scenes of distress which we meet with in comedy, than the high-wrought woes of tragedy; and I believe it is true. But this arises from the woes of tragedy being so often appropriated to high and mighty personages, and strained beyond the modesty of nature, in order to suit their great dignity; or, from the softened griefs of more gentle and familiar characters, being rendered feeble and tiresome with too much repetition and whining. It arises from the greater facility with which we enter into the distresses of people more upon a level with ourselves; and whose sorrows are expressed in less studied and unnatural language.

a more powerful effect in repressing similar intemperance in the mind of a spectator, than many moral cautions, or even, perhaps, than the terrific examples of tragedy. There are to be found, no doubt, in the works of our best dramatick writers, comick scenes descriptive of the stronger passions, but it is generally the inferiour characters of the piece who are made the subjects of them, very rarely those in whom we are much interested; and consequently the useful effect of such scenes upon the mind is very much weakened. This general appropriation of them has tempted our less skilful Dramatists to exaggerate, and step, in further quest of the ludicrous, so much beyond the bounds of nature, that the very effect they are so anxious to produce is thereby destroyed, and all useful application of it entirely cut off; for we never apply to ourselves a false representation of nature.

But a complete exhibition of passion, with its varieties and progress in the breast of man, has, I believe, scarcely ever been attempted in comedy. Even love, though the chief subject of almost every play, has been pourtrayed in a loose, scattered, and imperfect manner. The story of the lovers is acted over before us, whilst the characteristicks of that passion by which they are actuated, and which is the great master-spring of the whole, are faintly to be discovered. We are generally introduced to a lover after he has

long been acquainted with his mistress, and wants but the consent of some stubborn relation, relief from some embarrassment of situation, or the clearing up some mistake or love-quarrel occasioned by malice or accident, to make him completely happy. To overcome these difficulties, he is engaged in a busy train of contrivance and exertion, in which the spirit, activity, and ingenuity of the man is held forth to view, whilst the lover, comparatively speaking, is kept out of sight. But even when this is not the case; when the lover is not so busied and involved, this stage of the passion is exactly the one that is least interesting, and least instructive: not to mention, as I have done already, that one stage of any passion must shew it imperfectly.

From this view of the Comick Drama, I have been induced to believe, that, as companions to the forementioned tragedies, a series of comedies on a similar plan, in which bustle of plot, brilliancy of dialogue, and even the bold and striking in character, should, to the best of the authour's judgment, be kept in due subordination to nature, might likewise be acceptable to the publick. I am confident that comedy upon this plan is capable of being made as interesting as entertaining, and superiour in moral tendency to any other. For even in ordinary life, with very slight cause to excite them, strong passions will foster

themselves within the breast; and what are all the evils which vanity, folly, prejudice, or peculiarity of temper lead to, compared with those which such unquiet inmates produce? Were they confined to the exalted and the mighty, to those engaged in the great events of the world, to the inhabitants of palaces and camps, how happy, comparatively, would this world be! But many a miserable being, whom firm principle, timidity of character, or the fear of shame keeps back from the actual commission of crimes, is tormented in obscurity, under the dominion of those passions which place the seducer in ambush, rouse the bold spoiler to wrong, and strengthen the arm of the murderer. Though to those with whom such dangerous enemies have long found shelter, exposing them in an absurd and ridiculous light, may be shooting a finely-pointed arrow against the hardened rock; yet to those with whom they are but new, and less assured guests, this may prove a more successful mode of attack than any other.

It was the saying of a sagacious Scotchman, "Let who will make the laws of a nation, if I have the writing of its ballads." Something similar to this may be said in regard to the Drama. Its lessons reach not, indeed, to the lowest classes of the labouring people, who are the broad foundation of society, which can never be generally moved without en-

dangering every thing that is constructed upon it, and who are our potent and formidable ballad-readers; but they reach to the classes next in order to them, and who will always have over them no inconsiderable influence. The impressions made by it are communicated, at the same instant of time, to a greater number of individuals than those made by any other species of writing; and they are strengthened in every spectator, by observing their effects upon those who surround him. From this observation, the mind of my reader will suggest of itself what it would be unnecessary, and, perhaps, improper in me here to enlarge upon. The theatre is a school in which much good or evil may be learned. At the beginning of its career, the Drama was employed to mislead and excite; and, were I not unwilling to refer to transactions of the present times, I might abundantly confirm what I have said by recent examples. The authour, therefore, who aims in any degree to improve the mode of its instruction, and point to more useful lessons than it is generally employed to dispense, is certainly praiseworthy, though want of abilities may unhappily prevent him from being successful in his efforts.

This idea has prompted me to begin a work in which I am aware of many difficulties. In plays of this nature the passions must be depicted

not only with their bold and prominent features, but also with those minute and delicate traits which distinguish them in an infant, growing, and repressed state; which are the most difficult of all to counterfeit, and one of which, falsely imagined, will destroy the effect of a whole scene. The characters over whom they are made to usurp dominion must be powerful and interesting, exercising them with their full measure of opposition and struggle; for the chief antagonists they contend with must be the other passions and propensities of the heart, not outward circumstances and events. Though belonging to such characters, they must still be held to view in the most baleful and unseductive light; and those qualities in the impassioned which are necessary to interest us in their fate, must not be allowed, by any lustre borrowed from them, to diminish our abhorrence of guilt. The second, and even the inferiour persons of each play, as they must be kept perfectly distinct from the great impassioned one, should generally be represented in a calm unagitated state, and therefore more pains are necessary than in other dramatick works to mark them by appropriate distinctions of character, lest they should appear altogether insipid and insignificant. As the great object here is to trace passion through all its varieties, and in every stage, many of which are marked

by shades so delicate, that in much bustle of events they would be little attended to, or entirely overlooked, simplicity of plot is more necessary than in those plays where only occasional bursts of passion are introduced, to distinguish a character, or animate a scene. But where simplicity of plot is necessary, there is very great danger of making a piece appear bare and unvaried, and nothing but great force and truth in the delineations of nature will prevent it from being tiresome.* Soliloquy, or those overflowings of the per-

* To make up for this simplicity of plot, the show and decorations of the theatre ought to be allowed to plays written upon this plan in their full extent. How fastidious soever some poets may be in regard to these matters, it is much better to relieve our tired-out attention with a battle, a banquet, or a procession, than an accumulation of incidents. In the latter case the mind is harassed and confused with those doubts, conjectures, and disappointments which multiplied events occasion, and in a great measure unfitted for attending to the worthier parts of the piece: but in the former it enjoys a rest, a pleasing pause in its more serious occupation, from which it can return again, without any incumbrance of foreign intruding ideas. The show of a splendid procession will afford to a person of the best understanding, a pleasure in kind, though not in degree, with that which a child would receive from it; but when it is past he thinks no more of it; whereas some confusion of circumstances, some half-explained mistake, which gives him no pleasure at all when it takes place, may take his attention afterwards from the refined beauties of a natural and characteristick dialogue.

turbed soul, in which it unburthens itself of those thoughts which it cannot communicate to others, and which in certain situations is the only mode that a Dramatist can employ to open to us the mind he would display, must necessarily be often, and to considerable length, introduced. Here, indeed, as it naturally belongs to passion, it will not be so offensive as it generally is in other plays, when a calm unagitated person tells over to himself all that has befallen him, and all his future schemes of intrigue or advancement; yet to make speeches of this kind sufficiently natural and impressive to excite no degree of weariness nor distaste, will be found to be no easy task. There are, besides these, many other difficulties belonging peculiarly to this undertaking, too minute and tedious to mention. If, fully aware of them, I have not shrunk back from the attempt, it is not from any idea that my own powers or discernment will at all times enable me to overcome them; but I am emboldened by the confidence I feel in that candour and indulgence, with which the good and enlightened do ever regard the experimental efforts of those who wish in any degree to enlarge the sources of pleasure and instruction amongst men.

It will now be proper to say something of the particular plays which compose this volume. But in the first place, I must observe, that as I pretend

not to have overcome the difficulties attached to this design; so neither from the errours and defects, which, in these pages, I have thought it necessary to point out in the works of others, do I at all pretend to be blameless. To conceive the great moral object and outline of the story; to people it with various characters, under the influence of various passions; and to strike out circumstances and situations calculated to call them into action, is a very different employment of the mind from calmly considering those propensities of our nature, to which dramatick writings are most powerfully addressed, and taking a general view upon those principles of the works of preceding authours. They are employments which cannot well occupy it at the same time; and experience has taught us, that criticks do not unfrequently write in contradiction to their own rules. If I should, therefore, sometimes appear, in the foregoing remarks, to have provided a stick wherewith to break my own pate, I entreat that my reader will believe I am neither confident nor boastful, and use it with gentleness.

In the first two plays, where love is the passion under review, their relation to the general plan may not be very obvious. Love is the chief ground-work of almost all our tragedies and comedies, and so far they are not distinguished from others. But I have endeavoured

in both to give an unbroken view of the passion from its beginning, and to mark it as I went along, with those peculiar traits which distinguish its different stages of progression. I have in both these pieces grafted this passion, not on those open, communicative, impetuous characters, who have so long occupied the dramatick station of lovers, but on men of a firm, thoughtful, reserved turn of mind, with whom it commonly makes the longest stay, and maintains the hardest struggle. I should be extremely sorry if, from any thing at the conclusion of the tragedy, it should be supposed that I mean to countenance suicide, or condemn those customs whose object is the discouragement of it, by withholding from the body of the self-slain those sacred rites and marks of respect commonly shewn to the dead. Let it be considered, that whatever I have inserted there, which can at all raise any suspicion of this kind, is put into the mouths of rude uncultivated soldiers, who are roused with the loss of a beloved leader, and indignant at any idea of disgrace being attached to him. If it should seem inconsistent with the nature of this work, that in its companion, the comedy, I have made strong moral principle triumph over love, let it be remembered, that, without this, the whole moral tendency of a play, which must end happily, would have been destroyed; and that it is not my intention to encourage the in-

dulgence of this passion, amiable as it is, but to restrain it. The last play, the subject of which is hatred, will more clearly discover the nature and intention of my design. The rise and progress of this passion I have been obliged to give in retrospect, instead of representing it all along in its actual operation, as I could have wished to have done. But hatred is a passion of slow growth; and to have exhibited it from its beginnings would have included a longer period than even those who are least scrupulous about the limitation of dramatick time would have thought allowable. I could not have introduced my chief characters upon the stage as boys, and then as men. For this passion must be kept distinct from that dislike which we conceive for another when he has greatly offended us, and which is almost the constant companion of anger; and also from that eager desire to crush, and inflict suffering on him who has injured us, which constitutes revenge. This passion, as I have conceived it, is that rooted and settled aversion, which from opposition of character, aided by circumstances of little importance, grows at last into such antipathy and personal disgust as makes him who entertains it, feel, in the presence of him who is the object of it, a degree of torment and restlessness which is insufferable. It is a passion, I believe, less frequent than any other of

the stronger passions, but in the breast where it does exist, it creates, perhaps, more misery than any other. To endeavour to interest the mind for a man under the dominion of a passion so baleful, so unamiable, may seem, perhaps, reprehensible. I therefore beg it may be considered, that it is the passion and not the man which is held up to our execration: and that this and every other bad passion does more strongly evince its pernicious and dangerous nature, when we see it thus counteracting and destroying the good gifts of Heaven, than when it is represented as the suitable associate, in the breast of inmates as dark as itself. This remark will likewise be applicable to many of the other plays belonging to my work, that are intended to follow. A decidedly wicked character can never be interesting; and to employ such for the display of any strong passion would very much injure, instead of improving, the moral effect. In the breast of a bad man passion has comparatively little to combat; how then can it shew its strength? I shall say no more upon this subject, but submit myself to the judgment of my reader.

It may, perhaps, be supposed, from my publishing these plays, that I have written them for the closet rather than the stage. If, upon perusing them with attention, the reader is disposed to think they are better calculated for the first than

the last, let him impute it to want of skill in the authour, and not to any previous design. A play but of small poetical merit, that is suited to strike and interest the spectator, to catch the attention of him who will not, and of him who cannot read, is a more valuable and useful production than one whose elegant and harmonious pages are admired in the libraries of the tasteful and refined. To have received approbation from an audience of my countrymen, would have been more pleasing to me than any other praise. A few tears from the simple and young would have been, in my eyes, pearls of great price; and the spontaneous, untutored plaudits of the rude and uncultivated would have come to my heart as offerings of no mean value. I should, therefore, have been better pleased to have introduced them to the world from the stage than from the press. I possess, however, no likely channel to the former mode of publick introduction: and, upon further reflection, it appeared to me, that by publishing them in this way, I have an opportunity afforded me of explaining the design of my work, and enabling the publick to judge, not only of each play by itself, but as making a part likewise of the whole; an advantage which, perhaps, does more than overbalance the splendour and effect of theatrical representation.

It may be thought, that with this extensive plan before me, I should not have been in a hurry to publish, but have waited to give a larger portion of it to the publick, which would have enabled them to make a truer estimate of its merit. To bring forth only three plays of the whole, and the last without its intended companion, may seem like the haste of those vain people, who, as soon as they have written a few pages of a discourse, or a few couplets of a poem, cannot be easy till every body has seen them. I do protest, in honest simplicity! it is distrust and not confidence, that has led me, at this early stage of the undertaking, to bring it before the publick. To labour in uncertainty is at all times unpleasant: but to proceed in a long and difficult work with any impression upon your mind that your labour may be in vain; that the opinion you have conceived of your ability to perform it may be a delusion, a false suggestion of self-love, the fantasy of an aspiring temper, is most discouraging and cheerless. I have not proceeded so far, indeed, merely upon the strength of my own judgment: but the friends to whom I have shewn my manuscripts are partial to me, and their approbation, which, in the case of any indifferent person, would be in my mind completely decisive, goes but a little way in relieving me from these apprehensions. To step beyond the

circle of my own immediate friends in quest of opinion, from the particular temper of my mind, I feel an uncommon repugnance: I can with less pain to myself bring them before the public at once, and submit to its decision.* It is to my countrymen at large I call for assistance. If this work is fortunate enough to attract their attention, let their strictures as well as their praise come to my aid: the one will encourage me in a long and arduous undertaking, the other will teach me to improve it as I advance. For there are many errours that may be detected, and improvements that may be suggested, in the prosecution of this work, which, from the observations of a great variety of readers, are more likely to be pointed out to me, than from those of a small number of persons, even of the best judgment. I am not possessed of that confidence in mine own powers, which enables the concealed genius, under the pressure of present discouragement, to pursue his labours in security, looking firmly forward to other more enlightened times for his reward. If my own countrymen, with whom I live and converse, who look upon the

* The first of these plays, indeed, has been shewn to two or three Gentlemen whom I have not the honour of reckoning amongst my friends. One of them, who is a man of distinguished talents, has honoured it with very flattering approbation; and, at his suggestion, one or two slight alterations in it have been made.

same race of men, the same state of society, the same passing events with myself, receive not my offering, I presume not to look to posterity.

Before I close this discourse, let me crave the forbearance of my reader, if he has discovered in the course of it any unacknowledged use of the thoughts of other authours, which he thinks ought to have been noticed; and let me beg the same favour, if in reading the following plays, any similar neglect seems to occur. There are few writers who have sufficient originality of thought to strike out for themselves new ideas upon every occasion. When a thought presents itself to me, as suited to the purpose I am aiming at, I would neither be thought proud enough to reject it, on finding that another has used it before me, nor mean enough to make use of it without acknowledging the obligation, when I can at all guess to whom such acknowledgments are due. But I am situated where I have no library to consult; my reading through the whole of my life has been of a loose, scattered, unmethodical kind, with no determined direction, and I have not been blessed by nature with the advantages of a retentive or accurate memory. Do not, however, imagine from this, I at all wish to insinuate that I ought to be acquitted of every obligation to preceding authours; and that when a palpable similarity of thought and expression

is observable between us, it is a similarity produced by accident alone, and with perfect unconsciousness on my part. I am frequently sensible, from the manner in which an idea arises to my imagination, and the readiness with which words, also, present themselves to clothe it in, that I am only making use of some dormant part of that hoard of ideas which the most indifferent memories lay up, and not the native suggestions of mine own mind. Whenever I have suspected myself of doing so, in the course of this work, I have felt a strong inclination to mark that suspicion in a note. But, besides that it might have appeared like an affectation of scrupulousness which I would avoid, there being likewise, most assuredly, many other places in it where I have done the same thing without being conscious of it, a suspicion of wishing to slur them over, and claim all the rest as unreservedly my own, would unavoidably have attached to me. If this volume should appear, to any candid and liberal critick, to merit that he should take the trouble of pointing out to me in what parts of it I seem to have made that use of other authours' writings, which, according to the fair laws of literature, ought to have been acknowledged, I shall think myself obliged to him. I shall examine the sources he points out as having supplied my own lack of ideas; and if this book should have the good fortune to go through

a second edition, I shall not fail to owe my obligations to him, and the authors from whom I may have borrowed.

How little credit soever, upon perusing these plays, the reader may think me entitled to in regard to the execution of the work, he will not, I flatter myself, deny me some credit in regard to the plan. I know of no series of plays, in any language, expressly descriptive of the different passions; and I believe there are few plays existing, in which the display of one strong passion is the chief business of the drama, so written that they could properly make part of such a series. I do not think that we should, from the works of various authours, be able to make a collection which would give us any thing exactly of the nature of that which is here proposed. If the reader, in perusing it, perceives that the abilities of the authour are not proportioned to the task which is imposed upon them, he will wish in the spirit of kindness rather than of censure, as I most sincerely do, that they had been more adequate to it. However, if I perform it ill, I am still confident that this (pardon me if I call it so) noble design will not be suffered to fall to the ground: some one will arise after me who will do it justice; and there is no poet, possessing genius for such a work, who will not at the same time possess that spirit of justice and of candour, which will lead him to remember me with respect.

I have now only to thank my reader, whoever he may be, who has followed me through the pages of this discourse, for having had the patience to do so. May he, in going through what follows (a wish the sincerity of which he cannot doubt), find more to reward his trouble than I dare venture to promise him; and for the pains he has already taken, and those which he intends to take for me, I request that he will accept of my grateful acknowledgments.

Note. — Shakspearc, more than any of our poets, gives peculiar and appropriate distinction to the characters of his tragedies. The remarks I have made, in regard to the little variety of character to be met with in tragedy, apply not to him. Neither has he, as other dramatists generally do, bestowed pains on the chief persons of his drama only, leaving the second and inferiour ones insignificant and spiritless. He never wears out our capacity to feel, by eternally pressing upon it. His tragedies are agreeably chequered with variety of scenes, enriched with good sense, nature, and vivacity, which relieve our minds from the fatigue of continued distress. If he sometimes carries this so far as to break in upon that serious tone of mind, which disposes us to listen with effect to the higher scenes of tragedy, he has done so chiefly in his historical plays, where the distresses set forth are commonly of that public kind, which does not, at any rate, make much impression upon the feelings.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Plays contained in this volume were all laid by for, at least, one year, before they were copied out to prepare them for the press; I have therefore had the advantage of reading them over, when they were in some measure effaced from my memory, and judging of them in some degree like an indifferent person. The Introduction has not had the same advantage; it was copied out for the press immediately after I had finished it, and I have not had courage to open the book, or read any part of it, till it was put into my hands to be corrected for the third edition. Upon reading it over again, it appears to me that a tone of censure and decision is too often discoverable in it, which I have certainly no title to assume. It was, perhaps, difficult to avoid this fault, and at the same time completely to give the view I desired of my motives and plan in this work; but I sincerely wish that I had been skilful enough to have accomplished it without falling into this errour. Though I have escaped, as far as I know, all censure on this account, yet I wish the Publick to be assured, that I am both sensible of, and grateful for, their forbearance.

BASIL:

A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN.

COUNT BASIL, *a General in the Emperour's service.*
COUNT ROSINBERG, *his Friend.*
DUKE OF MANTUA.
GAURICEIO, *his Minister.*
VALTOMER, FREDERICK, } *Two Officers of* Basil's *Troops.*
GEOFFRY, *an old Soldier very much maimed in the wars.*
MIRANDO, *a little Boy, favourite to* Victoria.

WOMEN.

VICTORIA, *Daughter to the* Duke of Mantua.
COUNTESS OF ALBINI, *Friend and Governess to* Victoria.
ISABELLA, *a Lady attending upon* Victoria.

Officers, Soldiers, *and* Attendants, Masks, Dancers, *&c.*

*** *The Scene is in* Mantua, *and its environs. Time supposed to be the Sixteenth Century, when* CHARLES *the Fifth defeated* FRANCIS *the First, at the Battle of* Pavia.

BASIL.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *An Open Street, crowded with People, who seem to be waiting in expectation of some show.*

Enter a CITIZEN.

First Man. Well, friend, what tidings of the grand procession?

Cit. I left it passing by the northern gate.

Second Man. I've waited long, I'm glad it comes at last.

Young Man. And does the Princess look so wondrous fair
As fame reports?

Cit. She is the fairest lady of the train, —
Yet all the fairest beauties of the court
Are in her train.

Old Man. Bears she such off'rings to Saint Francis' shrine,
So rich, so marvellous rich, as rumour says?
— 'Twill drain the treasury!

Cit. Since she, in all this splendid pomp, returns
Her publick thanks to the good patron Saint,
Who from his sick bed hath restor'd her father,
Thou wouldst not have her go with empty hands?
She loves magnificence. —

(*Discovering amongst the crowd Old* Geoffry.)

Ha! art thou here, old remnant of the wars?
Thou art not come to see this courtly show,
Which sets the young agape?
Geof. I came not for the show; and yet, methinks,
It were a better jest upon me still,
If thou didst truly know mine errand here.
Cit. I pri'thee say.
Geof. What, must I tell it thee?
As o'er my evening fire I musing sat,
Some few days since, my mind's eye backward turn'd
Upon the various changes I have pass'd —
How in my youth, with gay attire allur'd,
And all the grand accoutrements of war,
I left my peaceful home: Then my first battles,
When clashing arms, and sights of blood were new:
Then all the after chances of the war:
Ay, and that field, a well-fought field it was,
When with an arm (I speak not of it oft)
Which now (*pointing to his empty sleeve*) thou seest in no arm of mine,
In a straight pass I stopp'd a thousand foes,
And turn'd my flying comrades to the charge;
For which good service, in his tented court,
My prince bestow'd a mark of favour on me;
Whilst his fair consort, seated by his side,
The fairest lady e'er mine eyes beheld,
Gave me what more than all besides I priz'd, —
Methinks I see her still — a gracious smile —

'Twas a heart-kindling smile,—a smile of praise—
Well, musing thus on all my fortunes past,
A neighbour drew the latchet of my door,
And full of news from town, in many words
Big with rich names, told of this grand procession;
E'en as he spoke a fancy seiz'd my soul
To see the princess pass, if in her looks
I yet might trace some semblance of her mother.
This is the simple truth; laugh as thou wilt.
I came not for the show.

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer to Geof. Make way that the procession may have room:
Stand you aside, and let this man have place.
(*Pushing* Geof. *and endeavouring to put another in his place.*)

Geof. But that thou art the prince's officer,
I'd give thee back thy push with better blows.

Officer. What, wilt thou not give place? the prince is near:
I will complain to him, and have thee caged.

Geof. Yes, do complain, I pray; and when thou dost,
Say that the private of the tenth brigade,
Who sav'd his army on the Danube's bank,
And since that time a private hath remain'd,
Dares, as a citizen, his right maintain
Against thy insolence. Go tell him this,
And ask him then what dungeon of his tower
He'll have me thrust into.

Cit. to Officer. This is old Geoffry of the tenth brigade.

Offi. I knew him not: you should have told me sooner. [EXIT, *looking much ashamed.*

Martial Musick heard at a distance.

Cit. Hark, this is musick of a warlike kind.

Enter Second CITIZEN.

To Sec. Cit. What sounds are these, good friend, which this way bear?

Sec. Cit. The brave Count Basil is upon his march,
To join the emp'rour with some chosen troops,
And as an ally doth through Mantua pass.

Geof. I've heard a good report of this young soldier.

Sec. Cit. 'Tis said he disciplines his men severely,
And over-much the old commander is,
Which seems ungracious in so young a man.

Geof. I know he loves not ease and revelry;
He makes them soldiers at no dearer rate
Than he himself hath paid. What, dost thou think,
That e'en the very meanest simple craft
Cannot without due diligence be learn'd,
And yet the nobler art of soldiership
May be attained by loit'ring in the sun?
Some men are born to feast and not to fight;
Whose sluggish minds, e'en in fair honour's field,
Still on their dinner turn —
Let such pot-boiling varlets stay at home,
And wield a flesh-hook rather than a sword.
In times of easy service, true it is,

An easy careless chief, all soldiers love;
But O! how gladly in the day of battle
Would they their jolly bottle-chief desert,
And follow such a leader as Count Basil!
So gath'ring herds, at pressing danger's call,
Confess the master Deer.

(*Musick is heard again, and nearer.* Geoffry *walks up and down with a military triumphant step.*)

Cit. What moves thee thus?

Geof. I've march'd to this same tune in glorious days.
My very limbs catch motion from the sound,
As they were young again.

Sec. Cit. But here they come.

Enter Count BASIL, *Officers and Soldiers in Procession, with Colours flying, and martial musick. When they have marched half-way over the Stage, an Officer of the Duke's enters from the opposite side, and speaks to* BASIL, *upon which he gives a sign with his hand, and the martial musick ceases; soft musick is heard at a little distance, and* VICTORIA, *with a long procession of Ladies, enters from the opposite side. The General, &c. pay obeisance to her, as she passes; she stops to return it, and then goes off with her train. After which the military procession moves on, and Exeunt.*

Cit. to Geof. What think'st thou of the princess?

Geof. She is fair,
But not so fair as her good mother was. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

A Publick Walk on the Ramparts of the Town.

Enter COUNT ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, *and* FREDERICK. — VALTOMER *enters by the opposite side of the Stage, and meets them.*

Valt. O what a jolly town for way-worn soldiers!
Rich steaming pots, and smell of dainty fare,
From every house salutes you as you pass:
Light feats and juggler's tricks attract the eye;
Musick and merriment in ev'ry street;
Whilst pretty damsels in their best attire,
Trip on in wanton groups, then look behind,
To spy the fools a-gazing after them.

Fred. But short will be the season of our ease,
For Basil is of flinty matter made,
And cannot be allured—
'Faith, Rosinberg, I would thou didst command us.
Thou art his kinsman, of a rank as noble,
Some years his elder too — How has it been
That he should be preferred? I see not why.

Ros. Ah! but I see it, and allow it well;
He is too much my pride to wake my envy.

Fred. Nay, Count, it is thy foolish admiration
Which raises him to such superiour height;
And truly thou hast so infected us,
That I at times have felt me aw'd before him,
I knew not why. 'Tis cursed folly this.

Thou art as brave, of as good parts as he.
Ros. Our talents of a diff'rent nature are;
Mine for the daily intercourse of life,
And his for higher things.
Fred. Well, praise him as thou wilt; I see it not;
I'm sure I am as brave a man as he.
Ros. Yes, brave thou art, but 'tis subaltern brav'ry,
And doth respect thyself. Thou'lt bleed as well,
Give and receive as deep a wound as he.
When Basil fights he wields a thousand swords;
For 'tis their trust in his unshaken mind,
O'erwatching all the changes of the field,
Calm and inventive 'midst the battle's storm,
Which makes his soldiers bold. —
There have been those, in early manhood slain,
Whose great heroick souls have yet inspir'd
With such a noble zeal their gen'rous troops,
That to their latest day of bearing arms,
Their grey-hair'd soldiers have all dangers brav'd
Of desp'rate service, claim'd with boastful pride,
As those who fought beneath them in their youth.
Such men have been; of whom it may be said,
Their spirits conquer'd when their clay was cold.
Valt. Yes, I have seen in the eventful field,
When new occasion mock'd all rules of art,
E'en old commanders hold experience cheap,
And look to Basil ere his chin was dark.
Ros. One fault he has; I know but only one;
His too great love of military fame

Absorbs his thoughts, and makes him oft appear
Unsocial and severe.

Fred. Well, feel I not undaunted in the field?
As much enthusiastick love of glory?
Why am I not as good a man as he?

Ros. He's form'd for great occasions, thou for small.

Valt. But small occasions in the path of life
Lie thickly sown, while great are rarely scatter'd.

Ros. By which you would infer that men like Fred'rick
Should on the whole a better figure make,
Than men of higher parts. It is not so;
For some shew well, and fair applauses gain,
Where want of skill in other men is graceful.
Pray do not frown, good Fred'rick, no offence:
Thou canst not make a great man of thyself;
Yet wisely deign to use thy native pow'rs,
And prove an honour'd courtly gentleman.
But hush! no more of this; here Basil comes.

Enter BASIL, *who returns their salute without speaking.*

Ros. What think'st thou, Valtomer, of Mantua's princess?

Valt. Fame prais'd her much, but hath not prais'd her more
Than on a better proof the eye consents to.
With all that grace and nobleness of mien,
She might do honour to an emp'rour's throne;

She is too noble for a petty court.
Is it not so, my Lord? — (*To* Basil, *who only bows assent.*)
Nay, she demeans herself with so much grace,
Such easy state, such gay magnificence,
She should be queen of revelry and show.

Fred. She's charming as the goddess of delight.

Valt. But after her, she most attracted me
Who wore the yellow scarf and walk'd the last;
For tho' Victoria is a lovely woman —

Fred. Nay, it is treason but to call her woman;
She's a divinity, and should be worshipp'd.
But on my life, since now we talk of worship,
She worshipp'd Francis with right noble gifts!
They sparkled so with gold and precious gems —
Their value must be great; some thousand crowns.

Ros. I would not rate them at a price so mean;
The cup alone, with precious stones beset,
Would fetch a sum as great. That olive-branch
The princess bore herself, of fretted gold,
Was exquisitely wrought. I mark'd it more,
Because she held it in so white a hand.

Bas. (*in a quick voice.*) Mark'd you her hand?
I did not see her hand.
And yet she wav'd it twice.

Ros. It is a fair one, tho' you mark'd it not.

Valt. I wish some painter's eye had view'd the group,
As she and all her lovely damsels pass'd;
He would have found wherewith t'enrich his art.

Ros. I wish so too; for oft their fancied beauties

Have so much cold perfection in their parts,
'Tis plain they ne'er belong'd to flesh and blood.
This is not truth, and doth not please so well
As the varieties of lib'ral nature,
Where ev'ry kind of beauty charms the eye ;
Large and small featur'd, flat and prominent,
Ay, by the mass ! and snub-nos'd beauties too.
'Faith, ev'ry woman hath some witching charm,
If that she be not proud, or captious.

Valt. Demure, or over-wise, or giv'n to freaks.

Ros. Or giv'n to freaks ! hold, hold, good Valtomer !

Thou'lt leave no woman handsome under heav'n.

Valt. But I must leave you for an hour or so;
I mean to view the town.

Fred. I'll go with thee.

Ros. And so will I.

[EXEUNT *Valt. Fred. and Ros.*

Re-enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. I have repented me, I will not go ;
They will be too long absent. — (*Pauses, and looks at* Basil, *who remains still musing without seeing him.*)
What mighty thoughts engage my pensive friend?

Bas. O it is admirable !

Ros. How runs thy fancy ? what is admirable?

Bas. Her form, her face, her motion, ev'ry thing!

Ros. The princess ; yes, have we not prais'd her much ?

Bas. I know you prais'd her, and her off'rings too !

She might have giv'n the treasures of the east,
Ere I had known it.
O! didst thou mark her when she first appear'd?
Still distant, slowing moving with her train;
Her robe and tresses floating on the wind,
Like some light figure in a morning cloud?
Then, as she onward to the eye became
The more distinct, how lovelier still she grew!
That graceful bearing of her slender form;
Her roundly spreading breast, her tow'ring neck,
Her face ting'd sweetly with the bloom of youth—
But when approaching near, she tow'rds us turn'd,
Kind mercy! what a countenance was there!
And when to our salute she gently bow'd,
Didst mark that smile rise from her parting lips?
Soft swell'd her glowing cheek, her eyes smil'd too?
O how they smil'd! 'twas like the beams of heav'n!
I felt my roused soul within me start,
Like something wak'd from sleep.

Ros. The beams of heav'n do many slumb'rers wake
To care and misery!

Bas. There's something grave and solemn in your voice
As you pronounce these words. What dost thou mean?
Thou wouldst not sound my knell?

Ros. No, not for all beneath the vaulted sky!
But to be plain, thus warmly from your lips,
Her praise displeases me. To men like you,
If love should come, he proves no easy guest.

Bas. What, dost thou think I am beside myself,
And cannot view the fairness of perfection
With that delight which lovely beauty gives,
Without tormenting me with fruitless wishes,
Like the poor child who sees its brighten'd face,
And whimpers for the moon? Thou art not serious.
From early youth, war has my mistress been,
And tho' a rugged one, I'll constant prove,
And not forsake her now. There may be joys
Which, to the strange o'erwhelming of the soul,
Visit the lover's breast beyond all others;
E'en now, how dearly do I feel there may!
But what of them? they are not made for me —
The hasty flashes of contending steel
Must serve instead of glances from my love,
And for soft breathing sighs the cannon's roar.

Ros. (*taking his hand.*) Now am I satisfied. Forgive me, Basil.

Bas. I'm glad thou art; we'll talk of her no more;
Why should I vex my friend?

Ros. Thou hast not issued orders for the march.

Bas. I'll do it soon; thou need'st not be afraid.
To-morrow's sun shall bear us far from hence,
Never perhaps to pass these gates again.

Ros. With last night's close, did you not curse this town
That would one single day your troops retard?
And now, methinks, you talk of leaving it,
As tho' it were the place that gave you birth;

As tho' you had around these strangers' walls
Your infant gambols play'd.

Bas. The sight of what may be but little priz'd,
Doth cause a solemn sadness in the mind,
When view'd as that we ne'er shall see again.

Ros. No, not a whit to wandering men like us.
No, not a whit! What custom hath endear'd
We part with sadly, tho' we prize it not:
But what is new some powerful charm must own,
Thus to affect the mind.

Bas. (*hastily.*) We'll let it pass — It hath no consequence:
Thou art impatient.

Ros. I'm not impatient. 'Faith, I only wish
Some other route our destin'd march had been,
That still thou mightst thy glorious course pursue
With an untroubled mind.

Bas. O! wish it, wish it not! bless'd be that route!
What we have seen to-day, I must remember —
I should be brutish if I could forget it.
Oft in the watchful post, or weary march,
Oft in the nightly silence of my tent,
My fixed mind shall gaze upon it still;
But it will pass before my fancy's eye,
Like some delightful vision of the soul,
To soothe, not trouble it.

Ros. What! 'midst the dangers of eventful war,
Still let thy mind be haunted by a woman?
Who would, perhaps, hear of thy fall in battle,
As Dutchmen read of earthquakes in Calabria,

And never stop to cry "alack a-day!"
For me there is but one of all the sex,
Who still shall hold her station in my breast,
'Midst all the changes of inconstant fortune;
Because I'm passing sure she loves me well,
And for my sake a sleepless pillow finds
When rumour tells bad tidings of the war;
Because I know her love will never change,
Nor make me prove uneasy jealousy.

Bas. Happy art thou! who is this wondrous woman?

Ros. It is mine own good mother, faith and truth!

Bas. (*smiling.*) Give me thy hand; I love her dearly too.

Rivals we are not, tho' our love is one.

Ros. And yet I might be jealous of her love,
For she bestows too much of it on thee,
Who hast no claim but to a nephew's share.

Bas. (*going.*) I'll meet thee some time hence. I must to Court.

Ros. A private conf'rence will not stay thee long.

I'll wait thy coming near the palace gate.

Bas. 'Tis to the publick court I mean to go.

Ros. I thought you had determin'd otherwise.

Bas. Yes, but on farther thought it did appear
As tho' it would be failing in respect
At such a time — That look doth wrong me, Rosinberg!
For on my life, I had determin'd thus,
Ere I beheld — Before we enter'd Mantua.

But wilt thou change that soldier's dusty garb,
And go with me thyself?
Ros. Yes, I will go.
(*As they are going* Ros. *stops, and looks at* Basil.)
Bas. Why dost thou stop?
Ros. 'Tis for my wonted caution,
Which first thou gav'st me—I shall ne'er forget it!
'Twas at Vienna, on a public day;
Thou but a youth, I then a man full form'd;
Thy stripling's brow grac'd with its first cockade,
Thy mighty bosom swell'd with mighty thoughts.
Thou'rt for the court, dear Rosinberg, quoth thou!
"Now pray thee be not caught with some gay dame,
To laugh and ogle, and befool thyself:
It is offensive in the publick eye,
And suits not with a man of thy endowments."
So said your serious lordship to me then,
And have on like occasions, often since,
In other terms repeated.—
But I must go to-day without my caution.
Bas. Nay, Rosinberg, I am impatient now:
Did I not say we'd talk of her no more?
Ros. Well, my good friend, God grant we keep our word!

[EXEUNT.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

Note.—My first idea when I wrote this play, was to represent Basil as having seen Victoria for the first time in the procession, that I might shew more perfectly the passion

from its first beginning, and also its sudden power over the mind; but I was induced, from the criticism of one, whose judgment I very much respect, to alter it, and represent him as having formerly seen and loved her. The first Review that took notice of this work objected to Basil's having seen her before as a defect; and, as we are all easily determined to follow our own opinion, I have, upon after-consideration, given the play in this edition [*third*], as far as this is concerned, exactly in its original state. Strong internal evidence of this will be discovered by any one, who will take the trouble of reading attentively the second scenes of the first and second acts in the present and former editions of this book. Had Basil seen and loved Victoria before, his first speech, in which he describes her to Rosinberg as walking in the procession, would not be natural; and there are, I think, other little things besides, which will shew that the circumstance of his former meeting with her is an interpolation.

The blame of this, however, I take entirely upon myself: the Critick, whose opinion I have mentioned, judged of the piece entirely as an unconnected play, and knew nothing of the general plan of this work, which ought to have been communicated to him. Had it been, indeed, an unconnected play, and had I put this additional circumstance to it with proper judgment and skill, I am inclined to think it would have been an improvement.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Room of State. The* DUKE *of* MANTUA, BASIL, ROSINBERG, *and a number of Courtiers, Attendants, &c. The* DUKE *and* BASIL *appear talking together on the front of the Stage.*

Duke. But our opinions differ widely there;
From the position of the rival armies,
I cannot think they'll join in battle soon.

Bas. I am indeed beholden to your highness,
But tho' unwillingly, we must depart.
The foes are near, the time is critical;
A soldier's reputation is too fine,
To be expos'd e'en to the smallest cloud.

Duke. An untried soldier's is; but yours, my lord,
Nurs'd with the bloody show'rs of many a field,
And brightest sunshine of successful fortune,
A plant of such a hardy stem hath grown,
E'en Envy's sharpest blasts assail it not.
Yet after all, by the bless'd holy Cross!
I feel too warm an interest in the cause
To stay your progress here a single hour,
Did I not know your soldiers are fatigu'd,
And two days' rest would much recruit their strength.

Bas. Your highness will be pleas'd to pardon me;
My troops are not o'ermarch'd, and one day's rest
Is all our needs require.

Duke. Ah! hadst thou come

Unfetter'd with the duties of command,
I then had well retain'd thee for my guest,
With claims too strong, too sacred for denial.
Thy noble sire my fellow-soldier was ;
Together many a rough campaign we serv'd ;
I lov'd him well, and much it pleases me
A son of his beneath my roof to see.

Bas. Were I indeed free master of myself,
Strong inclination would detain me here ;
No other tie were wanting.
These gracious tokens of your princely favour
I'll treasure with my best remembrances ;
For he who shews them for my father's sake,
Does something sacred in his kindness bear,
As tho' he shed a blessing on my head.

Duke. Well, bear my greetings to the brave Piscaro,
And say how warmly I embrace the cause.
Your third day's march will to his presence bring
Your valiant troops : said you not so, my lord ?

Enter VICTORIA, *the* COUNTESS *of* ALBINI, ISABELLA, *and* LADIES.

Bas. (*who changes countenance upon seeing them.*)
Yes, I believe—I think—I know not well—
Yes, please your grace, we march by break of day.

Duke. Nay, that I know. I ask'd you, noble Count,
When you expect th' Imperial force to join.

Bas. When it shall please your grace—I crave your pardon—

I somewhat have mistaken of your words.

Duke. You are not well? your colour changes, Count,
What is the matter?

Bas. A dizzy mist that swims before my sight—
A ringing in my ears — 'tis strange enough —
'Tis slight — 'tis nothing worth — 'tis gone already.

Duke. I'm glad it is. Look to your friend, Count Rosinberg,
It may return again — (*To* Rosinberg, *who stands at a little distance, looking earnestly at* Basil. — Duke *leaves them, and joins* Victoria's *party.*)

Ros. Good heavens, Basil, is it thus with thee!
Thy hand shakes too: (*taking his hand.*)
Would we were far from hence!

Bas. I'm well again, thou need'st not be afraid.
'Tis like enough my frame is indispos'd
With some slight weakness from our weary march.
Nay, look not on me thus, it is unkindly —
I cannot bear thine eyes.

The DUKE, *with* VICTORIA *and her Ladies, advance to the front of the Stage to* BASIL.

Duke. Victoria, welcome here the brave Count Basil.
His kinsman too, the gallant Rosinberg.
May you, and these fair ladies so prevail,
Such gentle suitors cannot plead in vain,
To make them grace my court another day.
I shall not be offended when I see
Your power surpasses mine.

Vict. Our feeble efforts will presumptuous seem
Attempting that in which your highness fails.
Duke. There's honour in th' attempt; success attend ye. — (*Duke retires, and mixes with the Courtiers at the bottom of the Stage.*)
Vict. I fear we incommoded you, my Lord,
With the slow tedious length of our procession.
E'en as I pass'd, against my heart it went
To stop so long upon their weary way
Your tired troops. —
Bas. Ah! Madam, all too short!
Time never bears such moments on his wing,
But when he flies too swiftly to be mark'd.
Vict. Ah! surely then you make too good amends
By marking now his after-progress well.
To-day must seem a weary length to him
Who is so eager to be gone to-morrow.
Ros. They must not linger who would quit these walls;
For if they do, a thousand masked foes;
Some under show of rich luxurious feasts,
Gay, sprightly pastime, and high-zested game; —
Nay, some, my gentle ladies, true it is,
The very worst and fellest of the crew,
In fair alluring shape of beauteous dames,
Do such a barrier form t' oppose their way
As few men may o'ercome.
Isab. From this last wicked foe should we infer
Yourself have suffer'd much?
Albin. No, Isabella, these are common words,

To please you with false notions of your pow'r.
So all men talk of ladies and of love.
Vict. 'Tis even so. If love a tyrant be,
How dare his humble chained votaries
To tell such rude and wicked tales of him?
Bas. Because they most of lover's ills complain,
Who but affect it as a courtly grace,
Whilst he who feels is silent.
Ros. But there you wrong me; I have felt it oft.
Oft has it made me sigh at ladies' feet,
Soft ditties sing, and dismal sonnets scrawl.
Albin. In all its strange effects, most worthy Rosinberg,
Has it e'er made thee in a corner sit,
Sad, lonely, moping sit, and hold thy tongue?
Ros. No, 'faith, it never has.
Albin. Ha, ha, ha, ha! then thou hast never lov'd.
Ros. Nay, but I have, and felt love's bondage too.
Vict. Fye! it is pedantry to call it bondage!
Love-marring wisdom, reason full of bars,
Deserve, methinks, that appellation more.
Is it not so, my Lord? — (*To* Basil.)
Bas. O surely, Madam!
That is not bondage which the soul enthrall'd
So gladly bears, and quits not but with anguish.
Stern honour's laws, the fair report of men,
These are the fetters that enchain the mind,
But such as must not, cannot be unloos'd.
Vict. No, not unloos'd, but yet one day relax'd,
To grant a lady's suit, unus'd to sue.
Ros. Your highness deals severely with us now,

And proves indeed our freedom is but small,
Who are constrain'd, when such a lady sues,
To say, it cannot be.

Vict. It cannot be! Count Basil says not so.

Ros. For that I am his friend, to save him pain
I take th' ungracious office on myself.

Vict. How ill thy face is suited to thine office!

Ros. (*smiling.*) Would I could suit mine office
to my face,
If that would please your highness.

Vict. No, you are obstinate and perverse all,
And would not grant it if you had the pow'r.
Albini, I'll retire; come, Isabella.

Bas. (*aside to Ros.*) Ah, Rosinberg! thou
hast too far presum'd;
She is offended with us.

Ros. No, she is not —
What dost thou fear? be firm, and let us go.

Vict. (*pointing to a door leading to other apartments, by which she is ready to go out.*)
These are apartments strangers' love to see:
Some famous paintings do their walls adorn:
They lead you also to the palace court
As quickly as the way by which you came.

[EXIT Vict. *led out by* Ros., *and followed by* Isab.

Bas. (*aside, looking after them.*) O! what a fool
am I! where fled my thoughts?
I might as well as he, now, by her side,
Have held her precious hand enclos'd in mine?
As well as he, who cares not for it neither.
O but he does! that were impossible!

Albin. You stay behind, my lord.

Bas. Your pardon, Madam; honour me so far—

[EXEUNT, *handing out* Albini.

SCENE II.

A Gallery hung with Pictures. VICTORIA *discovered in conversation with* ROSINBERG, BASIL, ALBINI, *and* ISABELLA.

Vict. (*to Ros.*) It is indeed a work of wondrous art.
(*To Isab.*) You call'd Francisco here?

Isab. He comes even now.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Vict. (*to Ros.*) He will conduct you to the northern gall'ry;
Its striking shades will call upon the eye,
To point its place there needs no other guide.

[EXEUNT *Ros.* and *Attendant.*

(*To Bas.*) Loves not Count Basil too this charming art?
It is in ancient painting much admir'd.

Bas. Ah! do not banish me these few short moments:
Too soon they will be gone! for ever gone!

Vict. If they are precious to you, say not so,
But add to them another precious day.
A Lady asks it.

Bas. Ah, Madam! ask the life-blood from my heart!
Ask all but what a soldier may not give.

Vict. 'Tis ever thus when favours are denied;
All had been granted but the thing we beg;
And still some great unlikely substitute,
Your life, your soul, your all of earthly good,
Is proffer'd in the room of one small boon.
So keep your life-blood, gen'rous, valiant lord,
And may it long your noble heart enrich,
Until I wish it shed. (Bas. *attempts to speak.*)
Nay, frame no new excuse;
I will not hear it.

(*She puts out her hand as if she would shut his mouth, but at a distance from it;* Bas. *runs eagerly up to her, and presses it to his lips.*)

Bas. Let this sweet hand indeed its threat perform.
And make it heav'n to be for ever dumb!

(Vict. *looks stately and offended*—Basil *kneels.*)

O pardon me! I know not what I do.
Frown not, reduce me not to wretchedness;
But only grant —

Vict. What should I grant to him,
Who has so oft my earnest suit denied?

Bas. By heav'n I'll grant it! I'll do any thing:
Say but thou art no more offended with me.

Vict. (*raising him.*) Well, Basil, this good promise is thy pardon.
I will not wait your noble friend's return,
Since we shall meet again. —
You will perform your word?

Bas. I will perform it.

Vict. Farewell, my lord.

[EXIT, *with her Ladies.*

Bas. (*alone.*) "Farewell, my lord." O! what
delightful sweetness!
The musick of that voice dwells on the ear!
"Farewell, my lord!" — Ay, and then look'd
she so —
The slightest glance of her bewitching eye,
Those dark blue eyes, commands the inmost soul.
Well, there is yet one day of life before me,
And, whatsoe'er betide, I will enjoy it.
Tho' but a partial sunshine in my lot,
I will converse with her, gaze on her still,
If all behind were pain and misery.
Pain! Were it not the easing of all pain,
E'en in the dismal gloom of after years,
Such dear remembrance on the mind to wear,
Like silv'ry moon-beams on the 'nighted deep,
When heav'n's blest sun is gone?
Kind mercy! how my heart within me beat
When she so sweetly pled the cause of love!
Can she have lov'd? why shrink I at the thought?
Why should she not? no, no, it cannot be —
No man on earth is worthy of her love.
Ah! if she could, how blest a man were he!
Where rove my giddy thoughts? it must not be.
Yet might she well some gentle kindness bear;
Think of him oft, his absent fate inquire,
And, should he fall in battle, mourn his fall.
Yes, she would mourn — such love might she
bestow;
And poor of soul the man who would exchange it
For warmest love of the most loving dame!

But here comes Rosinberg—have I done well?
He will not say I have.

Enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. Where is the princess?
I'm sorry I return'd not ere she went.
Bas. You'll see her still.
Ros. What, comes she forth again?
Bas. She does to-morrow.
Ros. Thou hast yielded then.
Bas. Come, Rosinberg, I'll tell thee as we go:
It was impossible I should not yield.
Ros. O Basil! thou art weaker than a child.
Bas. Yes, yes, my friend, but 'tis a noble weakness.
A weakness which hath greater things achiev'd
Than all the firm determin'd strength of reason.
By heav'n! I feel a new-born pow'r within me,
Shall make me twenty-fold the man I've been
Before this fated day.
Ros. Fated indeed! but an ill-fated day,
That makes thee other than thy former self.
Yet let it work its will; it cannot change thee
To ought I shall not love.
Bas. Thanks, Rosinberg! thou art a noble heart!
I would not be the man thou couldst not love
For an Imperial Crown.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE III.

A Small Apartment in the Palace.

Enter DUKE *and* GAURIECIO.

Duke. The point is gain'd ; my daughter is successful ;
And Basil is detain'd another day.

Gaur. But does the princess know your secret aim ?

Duke. No, that had marr'd the whole ; she is a woman ;
Her mind, as suits the sex, too weak and narrow
To relish deep-laid schemes of policy.
Besides, so far unlike a child of mine,
She holds its subtle arts in high derision,
And will not serve us but with bandag'd eyes.
Gauriecio, could I trusty servants find,
Experienc'd, crafty, close, and unrestrain'd
By silly superstitious child-learnt fears,
What might I not effect ?

Gaur. O any thing !
The deep and piercing genius of your highness,
So ably serv'd, might e'en achieve the empire.

Duke. No, no, my friend, thou dost o'erprize my parts ;
Yet mighty things might be — deep subtle wits,
In truth, are master spirits in the world.
The brave man's courage, and the student's lore,
Are but as tools his secret ends to work,
Who hath the skill to use them.

This brave Count Basil, dost thou know him well?
Much have we gain'd, but for a single day,
At such a time, to hold his troops detain'd;
When, by that secret message of our spy,
The rival pow'rs are on the brink of action:
But might we more effect? Know'st thou this Basil?
Might he be tamper'd with?

Gaur. That were most dang'rous.—
He is a man, whose sense of right and wrong
To such a high romantick pitch is wound,
And all so hot and fiery in his nature,
The slightest hint, as tho' you did suppose
Baseness and treach'ry in him, so he'll deem it,
Would be to rouse a flame that might destroy.

Duke. But int'rest, int'rest, man's all-ruling pow'r,
Will tame the hottest spirit to your service,
And skilfully applied, mean service too;
E'en as there is an element in nature
Which, when subdu'd, will on your hearth fulfil
The lowest uses of domestick wants.

Gaur. Earth-kindled fire, which from a little spark,
On hidden fuel feeds his growing strength,
Till o'er the lofty fabrick it aspires
And rages out its pow'r, may be subdu'd,
And in your base domestick service bound;
But who would madly in its wild career
The fire of heav'n arrest to boil his pot?
No, Basil will not serve your secret schemes,

Tho' you had all to give ambition strives for.
We must beware of him.

Duke. His father was my friend, — I wish'd to gain him ;
But since fantastick fancies bind him thus,
The sin be on his head ; I stand acquitted,
And must deceive him, even to his ruin.

Gaur. I have prepar'd Bernardo for your service;
To-night he will depart for th' Austrian camp,
And should he find them on the eve of battle,
I've bid him wait the issue of the field.
If that our secret friends victorious prove,
With th' arrow's speed he will return again :
But should fair Fortune crown Piscaro's arms,
Then shall your soothing message greet his ears ;
For till our friends some sound advantage gain,
Our actions still must wear an Austrian face.

Duke. Well hast thou school'd him. Didst thou add withal,
That, 'tis my will he garnish well his speech,
With honied words of the most dear regard,
And friendly love I bear him? This is needful ;
And lest my slowness in the promis'd aid
Awake suspicion, bid him e'en rehearse
The many favours on my house bestow'd
By his Imperial master, as a theme
On which my gratitude delights to dwell.

Gaur. I have, an' please your highness.

Duke. Then 'tis well.

Gaur. But for the yielding up that little fort
There could be no suspicion.

Duke. My Governor I have severely punish'd,
As a most daring traitor to my orders.
He cannot from his darksome dungeon tell;
Why then should they suspect?

Gaur. He must not live should Charles prove victorious.

Duke. He's done me service; say not so, Gauriecio.

Gaur. A traitor's name he will not calmly bear;
He'll tell his tale aloud — he must not live.

Duke. Well, if it must — we'll talk of this again.

Gaur. But while with anxious care and crafty wiles,
You would enlarge the limits of your state,
Your highness must beware lest inward broils
Bring danger near at hand: your northern subjects
E'en now are discontented and unquiet.

Duke. What, dare the ungrateful miscreants thus return
The many favours of my princely grace?
'Tis ever thus: indulgence spoils the base;
Raising up pride, and lawless turbulence,
Like noxious vapours from the fulsome marsh
When morning shines upon it. —
Did I not lately with parental care,
When dire invaders their destruction threaten'd,
Provide them all with means of their defence?
Did I not, as a mark of gracious trust,
A body of their vagrant youth select
To guard my sacred person? till that day
An honour never yet allow'd their race.

Did I not suffer them, upon their suit,
T' establish manufactures in their towns?
And after all some chosen soldiers spare
To guard the blessings of interiour peace?
Gaur. Nay, please your highness, they do well allow,
That when your enemies, in fell revenge,
Your former inroads threaten'd to repay,
Their ancient arms you did to them restore,
With kind permission to defend themselves:
That so far have they felt your princely grace,
In drafting from their fields their goodliest youth
To be your servants: That you did vouchsafe,
On paying of a large and heavy fine,
Leave to apply the labour of their hands
As best might profit to the country's weal:
And to encourage well their infant trade,
Quarter'd your troops upon them. — Please your grace,
All this they do most readily allow.
Duke. They do allow it then, ungrateful varlets!
What would they have? what would they have, Gauriecio?
Gaur. Some mitigation of their grievous burdens,
Which, like an iron weight around their necks,
Do bend their care-worn faces to the earth,
Like creatures form'd upon its soil to creep,
Not stand erect, and view the sun of heav'n.
Duke. But they beyond their proper sphere would rise;

Let them their lot fulfil as we do ours.
Society of various parts is form'd;
They are its grounds, its mud, its sediment,
And we the mantling top which crowns the whole.
Calm, steady labour is their greatest bliss;
To aim at higher things beseems them not.
To let them work in peace my care shall be;
To slacken labour is to nourish pride.
Methinks thou art a pleader for these fools:
What may this mean, Gauriecio?

Gaur. They were resolv'd to lay their cause before you,
And would have found some other advocate
Less pleasing to your Grace, had I refus'd.

Duke. Well, let them know, some more convenient season
I'll think of this, and do for them as much
As suits the honour of my princely state.
Their prince's honour should be ever dear
To worthy subjects as their precious lives.

Gaur. I fear, unless you give some special promise,
They will be violent still—

Duke. Then do it, if the wretches are so bold;
We can retract it when the times allow;
'Tis of small consequence. Go see Bernardo,
And come to me again. [EXIT.

Gaur. (*solus.*) O happy people! whose indulgent lord
From ev'ry care, with which increasing wealth,

With all its hopes and fears, doth ever move
The human breast, most graciously would free,
And kindly leave you nought to do but toil!
This creature now, with all his reptile cunning,
Writhing and turning thro' a maze of wiles,
Believes his genius form'd to rule mankind;
And calls his sordid wish for territory
That noblest passion of the soul, ambition.
Born had he been to follow some low trade,
A petty tradesman still he had remain'd,
And us'd the art with which he rules a state
To circumvent his brothers of the craft,
Or cheat the buyers of his paltry ware.
And yet he thinks, — ha, ha, ha, ha! — he thinks
I am the tool and servant of his will.
Well, let it be; thro' all the maze of trouble
His plots and base oppression must create,
I'll shape myself a way to higher things:
And who will say 'tis wrong?
A sordid being, who expects no faith
But as self-interest binds; who would not trust
The strongest ties of nature on the soul,
Deserves no faithful service. Perverse fate!
Were I like him, I would despise this dealing;
But being as I am, born low in fortune,
Yet with a mind aspiring to be great,
I must not scorn the steps which lead to it:
And if they are not right, no saint am I;
I follow nature's passion in my breast,
Which urges me to rise in spite of fortune.

[EXIT.

SCENE IV.

An Apartment in the Palace. VICTORIA *and* ISABELLA *are discovered playing at Chess ; the Countess* ALBINI *sitting by them reading to herself.*

Vict. Away with it, I will not play again.
May men no more be foolish in my presence
If thou art not a cheat, an arrant cheat!
Isab. To swear that I am false by such an oath,
Should prove me honest, since its forfeiture
Would bring your highness gain.
Vict. Thou'rt wrong, my Isabella, simple maid;
For in the very forfeit of this oath,
There's death to all the dearest pride of women.
May man no more be foolish in my presence!
Isab. And does your grace, hail'd by applauding crowds,
In all the graceful eloquence address'd
Of most accomplish'd, noble, courtly youths,
Prais'd in the songs of heav'n-inspired bards,
Those awkward proofs of admiration prize,
Which rustick swains their village fair ones pay!
Vict. O, love will master all the power of art!
Ay, all! and she who never has beheld
The polish'd courtier, or the tuneful sage,
Before the glances of her conqu'ring eye
A very native simple swain become,
Has only vulgar charms.
To make the cunning artless, tame the rude,
Subdue the haughty, shake th' undaunted soul;

Yea, put a bridle in the lion's mouth,
And lead him forth as a domestick cur,
These are the triumphs of all-powerful beauty!
Did nought but flatt'ring words and tuneful praise,
Sighs, tender glances, and obsequious service,
Attend her presence, it were nothing worth:
I'd put a white coif o'er my braided locks,
And be a plain, good, simple, fire-side dame.

Alb. (*raising her head from her book.*) And is, indeed, a plain domestick dame,
Who fills the duties of an useful state,
A being of less dignity than she,
Who vainly on her transient beauty builds
A little poor ideal tyranny?

Isab. Ideal too!

Alb. Yes, most unreal pow'r;
For she who only finds her self-esteem
In others' admiration, begs an alms;
Depends on others for her daily food,
And is the very servant of her slaves;
Tho' oftentimes, in a fantastick hour,
O'er men she may a childish pow'r exert,
Which not ennobles, but degrades her state.

Vict. You are severe, Albini, most severe:
Were human passions plac'd within the breast
But to be curb'd, subdu'd, pluck'd by the roots?
All heaven's gifts to some good end were giv'n.

Alb. Yes, for a noble, for a generous end.

Vict. Am I ungen'rous then?

Alb. Yes, most ungen'rous!
Who, for the pleasure of a little pow'r,

Would give most unavailing pain to those
Whose love you ne'er can recompense again.
E'en now, to-day, O! was it not ungen'rous
To fetter Basil with a foolish tie,
Against his will, perhaps against his duty?

Vict. What, dost thou think against his will, my friend?

Alb. Full sure I am against his reason's will.

Vict. Ah! but indeed thou must excuse me here;
For duller than a shelled crab were she,
Who could suspect her pow'r in such a mind,
And calmly leave it doubtful and unprov'd.
But wherefore dost thou look so gravely on me?
Ah! well I read those looks! methinks they say,
"Your mother did not so."

Alb. Your highness reads them true, she did not so.
If foolish vanity e'er soil'd her thoughts,
She kept it low, withheld its aliment;
Not pamper'd it with ev'ry motley food,
From the fond tribute of a noble heart
To the lisp'd flattery of a cunning child.

Vict. Nay, speak not thus, Albini, speak not thus
Of little blue-eyed, sweet, fair-hair'd Mirando.
He is the orphan of a hapless pair,
A loving, beautiful, but hapless pair,
Whose story is so pleasing, and so sad,
The swains have turn'd it to a plaintive lay,
And sing it as they tend their mountain sheep.
Besides, (*to Isab.*) I am the guardian of his choice.
When first I saw him—dost thou not remember?

Isab. 'Twas in the publick garden.
Vict. Even so;
Perch'd in his nurse's arms, a roughsome quean,
Ill suited to the lovely charge she bore.
How stedfastly he fix'd his looks upon me,
His dark eyes shining thro' forgotten tears,
Then stretch'd his little arms and call'd me mother!
What could I do? I took the bantling home—
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.
Alb. Ah! there, my child, thou hast indeed no blame.
Vict. Now this is kindly said: thanks, sweet Albini!
Still call me child, and chide me as thou wilt.
O! would that I were such as thou could'st love!
Couldst dearly love, as thou didst love my mother!
Alb. (*pressing her to her breast.*) And do I not? all-perfect as she was,
I know not that she went so near my heart
As thou with all thy faults,
Vict. And say'st thou so? would I had sooner known!
I had done any thing to give thee pleasure.
Alb. Then do so now, and put thy faults away.
Vict. No, say not faults; the freaks of thoughtless youth.
Alb. Nay, very faults they must indeed be call'd.
Vict. O! say but foibles! youthful foibles only!
Alb. Faults, faults, real faults you must confess they are.
Vict. In truth I cannot do your sense the wrong
To think so poorly of the one you love.

Alb. I must be gone: thou hast o'ercome me now:
Another time I will not yield it so. [EXIT.

Isab. The Countess is severe, she's too severe:
She once was young tho' now advanc'd in years.

Vict. No, I deserve it all: she is most worthy.
Unlike those faded beauties of the court,
But now the wither'd stems of former flowers
With all their blossoms shed, her nobler mind
Procures to her the privilege of man,
Ne'er to be old till nature's strength decays.
Some few years hence, if I should live so long,
I'd be Albini rather than myself.

Isab. Here comes your little fav'rite.

Vict. I am not in the humour for him now.

Enter MIRANDO, *running up to* VICTORIA, *and taking hold of her gown, whilst she takes no notice of him, as he holds up his mouth to be kissed.*

Isab. (*to Mir.*) Thou seest the princess can't be troubled with thee.

Mir. O but she will! I'll scramble up her robe,
As naughty boys do when they climb for apples.

Isab. Come here, sweet child; I'll kiss thee in her stead.

Mir. Nay, but I will not have a kiss of thee.
Would I were tall! O were I but so tall!

Isab. And how tall wouldst thou be?

Mir. Thou dost not know?
Just tall enough to reach Victoria's lips.

Vict. (*embracing him.*) O! I must bend to this, thou little urchin.

Who taught thee all this wit, this childish wit?
Who does Mirando love? (*embraces him again.*)
Mir. He loves Victoria.
Vict. And wherefore loves he her?
Mir. Because she's pretty.
Isab. Hast thou no little prate to-day, Mirando?
No tale to earn a sugar-plumb withal?
Mir. Ay, that I have: I know who loves her grace.
Vict. Who is it pray? thou shalt have comfits for it.
Mir. (*looking slyly at her.*) It is — it is — it is the Count of Maldo.
Vict. Away, thou little chit! that tale is old,
And was not worth a sugar-plumb when new.
Mir. Well then, I know who loves her highness well.
Vict. Who is it then
Isab. Who is it, naughty boy?
Mir. It is the handsome marquis of Carlatzi.
Vict. No, no, Mirando, thou art naughty still:
Twice have I paid thee for that tale already.
Mir. Well then, indeed — I know who loves Victoria.
Vict. And who is he?
Mir. It is Mirando's self.
Vict. Thou little imp! this story is not new,
But thou shalt have thy hire. Come, let us go.
Go, run before us, Boy.
Mir. Nay, but I'll shew you how Count Wolvar look'd,

When he conducted Isabel from Court.
Vict. How did he look?
Mir. Give me your hand: he held his body thus:
(*putting himself in a ridiculous bowing posture.*)
And then he whisper'd softly; then look'd so;
(*ogling with his eyes affectedly.*)
Then she look'd so, and smil'd to him again.
(*throwing down his eyes affectedly.*)
Isab. Thou art a little knave, and must be whipp'd.
[EXEUNT. Mirando, *leading out* Victoria *affectedly.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *An open Street, or Square.*

Enter ROSINBERG *and* FREDERICK, *by opposite sides of the Stage.*

Fred. So Basil, from the pressing calls of war,
Another day to rest and pastime gives.
How is it now? methinks thou art not pleas'd.
Ros. It matters little if I am or not.
Fred. Now pray thee do confess thou art asham'd:
Thou, who art wisely wont to set at nought
The noble fire of individual courage,
And call calm prudence the superior virtue,
What sayst thou now, my candid Rosinberg,
When thy great captain, in a time like this,
Denies his weary troops one day of rest
Before the exertions of approaching battle,
Yet grants it to a pretty lady's suit?

Ros. Who told thee this? it was no friendly tale;
And no one else, besides a trusty friend,
Could know his motives. Then thou wrongst me too;
For I admire, as much as thou dost, Fred'rick,
The fire of valour, e'en rash heedless valour;
But not like thee do I depreciate
That far superiour, yea that god-like talent,
Which doth direct that fire, because indeed
It is a talent nature has denied me.

Fred. Well, well, and greatly he may boast his virtue,
Who risks perhaps th' Imperial army's fate,
To please a lady's freaks —

Ros. Go, go, thou'rt prejudic'd:
A passion which I do not chuse to name,
Has warp'd thy judgement.

Fred. No, by heav'n, thou wrongst me!
I do, with most enthusiastick warmth,
True valour love: wherever he is found,
I love the hero too; but hate to see
The praises due to him so cheaply earn'd.

Ros. Then mayst thou now these gen'rous feelings prove.
Behold that man, whose short and grizzly hair,
In clust'ring locks his dark brown face o'ershades;
Where now the scars of former sabre wounds,
In hon'rable companionship are seen
With the deep lines of age; whose piercing eye
Beneath its shading eye-brow keenly darts
Its yet unquenched beams, as tho' in age

Its youthful fire had been again renew'd,
To be the guardian of its darken'd mate.
See with what vig'rous steps his upright form
He onward bears; nay, e'en that vacant sleeve,
Which droops so sadly by his better side,
Suits not ungracefully the vet'ran's mien.
This is the man, whose glorious acts in battle,
We heard to-day related o'er our wine.
I go to tell the Gen'ral he is come:
Enjoy the gen'rous feelings of thy breast,
And make an old man happy. [EXIT.

Enter GEOFFRY.

Fred. Brave soldier, let me profit by the chance
That led me here; I've heard of thy exploits.
Geof. Ah! then you have but heard an ancient tale,
Which has been long forgotten.
Fred. But true it is, and should not be forgotten;
Tho' Gen'rals, jealous of their soldiers' fame,
May dash it with neglect.
Geof. There are, perhaps, who may be so ungen'rous.
Fred. Perhaps, sayst thou? in very truth there are.
How art thou else rewarded with neglect,
Whilst many a paltry fellow in thy corps
Has been promoted? it is ever thus.
Serv'd not Mardini in your company?
He was, tho' honour'd with a valiant name,
To those who knew him well, a paltry soldier.
Geof. Your pardon, Sir, we did esteem him much,
Although inferiour to his gallant friend,

The brave Sebastian.

Fred. The brave Sebastian!
He was, as I am told, a learned coxcomb,
And lov'd a goose-quill better than a sword.
What, dost thou call him brave?
Thou, who dost bear about that war-worn trunk,
Like an old target, hack'd and rough with wounds,
Whilst, after all his mighty battles, he
Was with a smooth skin in his coffin laid,
Unblemish'd with a scar.

Geof. His duty call'd not to such desp'rate service;
For I have fought where few alive remain'd,
And none unscath'd; where but a few remain'd,
Thus marr'd and mangled; (*shewing his wounds.*)
As belike you've seen,
O'summer nights, around th'evening lamp,
Some wretched moths, wingless, and half-consum'd,
Just feebly crawling o'er their heaps of dead. —
In Savoy, on a small, tho' desp'rate post,
Of full three hundred goodly chosen men,
But twelve were left, and right dear friends were we
For ever after. They are all dead now:
I'm old and lonely. — We were valiant hearts —
Fred'rick Dewalter would have stopp'd a breach
Against the devil himself. I'm lonely now!

Fred. I'm sorry for thee. Hang ungrateful chiefs!
Why wert thou not promoted?

Geof. After that battle, where my happy fate
Had led me to fulfil a glorious part,

Chaf'd with the gibing insults of a slave,
The worthless fav'rite of a great man's fav'rite,
I rashly did affront; our cautious prince,
With narrow policy dependant made,
Dar'd not, as I am told, promote me then,
And now he is asham'd, or has forgot it.

Fred. Fye, fye upon it! let him be asham'd!
Here is a trifle for thee — (*offering him money.*)

Geof. No, good sir,
I have enough to live as poor men do.
When I'm in want I'll thankfully receive,
Because I'm poor, but not because I'm brave.

Fred. You're proud, old soldier.

Geof. No, I am not proud;
For if I were, methinks I'd be morose,
And willing to depreciate other men.

Enter ROSINBERG.

Ros. (*clapping* Geof. *on the shoulder.*) How goes it with thee now, my good Field-marshal?

Geof. The better that I see your honour well,
And in the humour to be merry with me.

Ros. Faith, by my sword, I've rightly nam'd thee too:
What is a good Field-marshal, but a man,
Whose gen'rous courage and undaunted mind,
Doth marshal others on in glory's way?
Thou art not one by princely favour dubb'd,
But one of nature's making.

Geof. You shew, my lord, such pleasant courtesy,
I know not how —

Ros. But see, the Gen'ral comes.

Enter BASIL.

Ros. (*pointing to* Geof.) Behold the worthy vet'ran.

Bas. (*taking him by the hand.*) Brave honourable man, your worth I know,
And greet it with a brother-soldier's love.

Geof. (*taking away his hand in confusion.*) My Gen'ral, this is too much, too much honour.

Bas. (*taking his hand again.*) No, valiant soldier, I must have it so.

Geof. My humble state agrees not with such honour.

Bas. Think not of it, thy state is not thyself.
Let mean souls, highly rank'd, look down on thee,
As the poor dwarf, perch'd on a pedestal,
O'erlooks the giant: 'tis not worth a thought.
Art thou not Geoffry of the tenth brigade,
Whose warlike feats child, maid, and matron know?
And oft, cross-elbow'd, o'er his nightly bowl,
The jolly toper to his comrade tells?
Whose glorious feats of war, by cottage door,
The ancient soldier, tracing in the sand
The many movements of the varied field,
In warlike terms to list'ning swains relates;
Whose bosoms glowing at the wond'rous tale,
First learn to scorn the hind's inglorious life?
Shame seize me, if I would not rather be
The man thou art, than court-created chief,
Known only by the dates of his promotion!

Geof. Ah! would I were, would I were young again,
To fight beneath your standard, noble gen'ral!
Methinks what I have done were but a jest,
Ay, but a jest to what I now should do,
Were I again the man that I have been.
O! I could fight!

Bas. And wouldst thou fight for me?

Geof. Ay, to the death!

Bas. Then come, brave man, and be my champion still:
The sight of thee will fire my soldiers' breasts.
Come, noble vet'ran, thou shalt fight for me.

[EXIT *with* Geoffry.

Fred. What does he mean to do?

Ros. We'll know ere long.

Fred. Our gen'ral bears it with a careless face,
For one so wise.

Ros. A careless face! on what?

Fred. Now feign not ignorance, we know it all.
News which have spread in whispers from the court,
Since last night's messenger arriv'd from Milan.

Ros. As I'm an honest man, I know it not!

Fred. 'Tis said the rival armies are so near,
A battle must immediately ensue.

Ros. It cannot be. Our gen'ral knows it not.
The Duke is of our side a sworn ally,
And had such messenger to Mantua come,
He would have been appriz'd upon the instant.
It cannot be, it is some idle tale.

Fred. So may it prove till we have join'd them too,

Then heaven grant they may be nearer still!
For O! my soul for war and danger pants,
As doth the noble lion for his prey.
My soul delights in battle.
Ros. Upon my simple word, I'd rather see
A score of friendly fellows shaking hands,
Than all the world in arms. Hast thou no fear?
Fred. What dost thou mean?
Ros. Hast thou no fear of death?
Fred. Fear is a name for something in the mind,
But what, from inward sense, I cannot tell.
I could as little anxious march to battle,
As when a boy to childish games I ran.
Ros. Then as much virtue hast thou in thy valour,
As when a child thou hadst in childish play.
The brave man is not he who feels no fear,
For that were stupid and irrational;
But he, whose noble soul its fear subdues,
And bravely dares the danger nature shrinks from.
As for your youth, whom blood and blows delight,
Away with them! there is not in the crew
One valiant spirit. — Ha! what sound is this?
(*shouting is heard without.*)
Fred. The soldiers shout; I'll run and learn the cause.
Ros. But tell me first, how dids't thou like the vet'ran?
Fred. He is too proud; he was displeas'd with me
Because I offer'd him a little sum.
Ros. What money! O! most gen'rous noble spirit!

Noble rewarder of superiour worth!
A halfpenny for Bellisarius!
But hark! they shout again—here comes Valtomer.
(*Shouting heard without.*)

Enter VALTOMER.

What does this shouting mean?
Valt. O! I have seen a sight, a glorious sight!
Thou would'st have smil'd to see it.
Ros. How smile? methinks thine eyes are wet
with tears.
Valt. (*passing the back of his hands across his eyes.*)
'Faith so they are; well, well, but I smil'd too.
You heard the shouting.
Ros. and Fred. Yes.
Valt. O had you seen it!
Drawn out in goodly ranks, there stood our troops;
Here, in the graceful state of manly youth,
His dark face brighten'd with a gen'rous smile,
Which to his eyes such flashing lustre gave,
As tho' his soul, like an unsheathed sword,
Had thro' them gleam'd, our noble gen'ral stood;
And to his soldiers, with heart-moving words,
The vet'ran shewing, his brave deeds reheats'd;
Who by his side stood like a storm-scath'd oak,
Beneath the shelter of some noble tree,
In the green honours of its youthful prime.
Ros. How look'd the veteran?
Valt. I cannot tell thee!
At first he bore it up with chearful looks,
As one who fain would wear his honours bravely,

And greet the soldiers with a comrade's face:
But when Count Basil, in such moving speech,
Told o'er his actions past, and bad his troops
Great deeds to emulate, his count'nance chang'd;
High-heav'd his manly breast, as it had been
By inward strong emotion half convuls'd;
Trembled his nether lip; he shed some tears.
The gen'ral paus'd, the soldiers shouted loud;
Then hastily he brush'd the drops away,
And wav'd his hand, and clear'd his tear-chok'd voice,
As tho' he would some grateful answer make;
When back with double force the whelming tide
Of passion came; high o'er his hoary head
His arm he toss'd, and heedless of respect,
In Basil's bosom hid his aged face,
Sobbing aloud. From the admiring ranks
A cry arose; still louder shouts resound.
I felt a sudden tightness grasp my throat
As it would strangle me; such as I felt,
I knew it well, some twenty years ago,
When my good father shed his blessing on me:
I hate to weep, and so I came away.

Ros. (*giving* Valt. *his hand.*) And there, take thou my blessing for the tale.
Hark! how they shout again! 'tis nearer now.
This way they march.

[*Martial Musick heard. Enter Soldiers marching in order, bearing* GEOFFRY *in triumph on their shoulders. After them enter* BASIL: *the whole preceded by a band of musick. They cross over the stage, are joined by* ROS. *&c. and* EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

Enter GAURIECIO *and a* GENTLEMAN, *talking as they enter.*

Gaur. So slight a tie as this we cannot trust,
One day her influence may detain him here,
But love a feeble agent may be found
With the ambitious.
Gent. And so you think this boyish odd conceit
Of bearing home in triumph with his troops
That aged soldier, will your purpose serve?
Gaur. Yes, I will make it serve; for tho' my prince
Is little scrupulous of right and wrong,
I have possess'd his mind, as tho' it were
A flagrant insult on his princely state
To honour thus the man he has neglected,
Which makes him relish, with a keener taste,
My purpos'd scheme. Come, let us fall to work.
With all their warm heroick feelings rous'd,
We'll spirit up his troops to mutiny,
Which must retard, perhaps undo him quite.
Thanks to his childish love, which has so well
Procur'd us time to tamper with the fools.
Gent. Ah! but those feelings he has wak'd within them,
Are gen'rous feelings, and endear himself.
Gaur. It matters not, tho' gen'rous in their nature,
They yet may serve a most ungen'rous end;

And he who teaches men to think, tho' nobly,
Doth raise within their minds a busy judge
To scan his actions. Send thine agents forth,
And sound it in their ears how much Count Basil
Affects all difficult and desp'rate service,
To raise his fortunes by some daring stroke;
Having unto the Emperour pledg'd his word,
To make his troops all dreadful hazards brave:
For which intent he fills their simple minds
With idle tales of glory and renown;
Using their warm attachment to himself
For most unworthy ends.
This is the busy time, go forth, my friend;
Mix with the soldiers, now in jolly groups
Around their ev'ning cups. There, spare no cost.
(*gives him a purse.*)
Observe their words, see how the poison takes,
And then return again.

Gent. I will, my lord.

[EXEUNT *severally.*

SCENE III.

A Suite of grand Apartments, with their wide doors thrown open, lighted up with lamps, and filled with company in masks. Enter several Masks, and pass through the first apartment to the other rooms. Then enter BASIL *in the disguise of a wounded soldier.*

Bas. (*alone.*) Now am I in the region of delight!
Within the blessed compass of these walls
She is; the gay light of those blazing lamps

Doth shine upon her, and this painted floor
Is with her footsteps press'd. E'en now, perhaps,
Amidst that motley rout she plays her part:
There will I go; she cannot be conceal'd;
For but the flowing of her graceful robe
Will soon betray the lovely form that wears it,
Tho' in a thousand masks. Ye homely weeds,—
(*looking at his habit.*)
Which half conceal, and half declare my state,
Beneath your kind disguise, O! let me prosper,
And boldly take the privilege ye give:
Follow her mazy steps, crowd by her side;
Thus, near her face my list'ning ear incline,
And feel her soft breath fan my glowing cheek;
Her fair hand seize, yea, press it closely too!
May it not be e'en so? by heav'n it shall!
This once, O! serve me well, and ever after
Ye shall be treasur'd like a monarch's robes;
Lodg'd in my chamber, near my pillow kept;
And oft with midnight lamp I'll visit ye,
And gazing wistfully, this night recall,
With all its past delights. — But yonder moves
A slender form, dress'd in an azure robe;
It moves not like the rest — it must be she!
(*Goes hastily into another apartment, and mixes with the Masks.*)

Enter ROSINBERG, *fantastically dressed, with a willow upon his head, and scraps of sonnets and torn letters fluttering round his neck, pursued by a group of Masks from one of the inner*

apartments, who hoot at him, and push him about as he enters.

1*st Mask.* Away, thou art a saucy jeering knave,
And fain wouldst make a jest of all true love.

Ros. Nay, gentle ladies, do not buffet me:
I am a right true servant of the fair;
And as this woeful chaplet on my brow,
And these tear-blotted sonnets would denote,
A poor abandon'd lover, out of place;
With any lover ready to engage,
Who will enlist me in her loving service.
Of a convenient kind my talents are,
And to all various humours may be shap'd.

2*d Mask.* What canst thou do?

3*d Mask.* Ay, what besides offending?

Ros. O! I can sigh so deeply, look so sad;
Pule out a piteous tale on bended knee;
Groan like a ghost; so very wretched be,
As would delight a tender lady's heart
But to behold.

1*st Mask.* Poo, poo, insipid fool!

Ros. But should my lady brisker mettle own,
And tire of all those gentle dear delights,
Such pretty little quarrels I'd invent —
As whether such a fair-one (some dear friend)
Whose squirrel's tail was pinch'd, or the soft maid,
With fav'rite lap-dog of a surfeit sick,
Have greatest cause of delicate distress:
Or whether —

1*st Mask.* Go, thou art too bad indeed!
(*aside.*) How could he know I quarrell'd with the Count?

2d Mask. Wilt thou do nothing for thy lady's fame?

Ros. Yes, lovely shepherdess, on ev'ry tree
I'll carve her name, with true-love garlands bound:
Write madrigals upon her roseate cheeks;
Odes to her eye; 'faith, ev'ry wart and mole
That spots her snowy skin, shall have its sonnet!
I'll make love-posies for her thimble's edge,
Rather than please her not.

3d Mask. But for her sake what dangers wilt thou brave?

Ros. In truth, fair Nun, I stomach dangers less
Than other service, and were something loth
To storm a convent's walls for one dear glance;
But if she'll wisely manage this alone,
As maids have done, come o'er the wall herself,
And meet me fairly on the open plain,
I will engage her tender steps to aid
In all annoyance of rude briar or stone,
Or crossing rill, some half-foot wide, or so,
Which that fair lady should unaided pass,
Ye gracious pow'rs, forbid! I will defend
Against each hideous fly, whose dreadful buzz—

4th Mask. Such paltry service suits thee best indeed.
What maid of spirit would not spurn thee from her?

Ros. Yes, to recall me soon, sublime Sultana!
For I can stand the burst of female passion,
Each change of humour and affected storm,
Be scolded, frown'd upon, to exile sent,

Recall'd, caress'd, chid, and disgrac'd again;
And say what maid of spirit would forego
The bliss of one to exercise it thus!
O! I can bear ill treatment like a lamb!

4th Mask. (*beating him.*) Well, bear it then, thou hast deserv'd it well.

Ros. Zounds, lady! do not give such heavy blows;
I'm not your husband, as belike you guess.

5th Mask. Come, lover, I enlist thee for my swain;
Therefore, good lady, do forbear your blows,
Nor thus assume my rights.

Ros. Agreed. Wilt thou a gracious mistress prove?

5th Mask. Such as thou wouldst, such as thy genius suits;
For since of universal scope it is,
All women's humour shalt thou find in me.
I'll gently soothe thee with such winning smiles—
To nothing sink thee with a scornful frown:
Teaze thee with peevish and affected freaks;
Caress thee, love thee, hate thee, break thy pate;
But still between the whiles I'll careful be,
In feigned admiration of thy parts,
Thy shape, thy manners, or thy graceful mien,
To bind thy giddy soul with flatt'ry's charm;
For well thou know'st that flatt'ry ever is
The tickling spice, the pungent seasoning
Which makes this motley dish of monstrous scraps
So pleasing to the dainty lover's taste.

Thou canst not leave, tho' violent in extreme,
And most vexatious in her teazing moods,
Thou canst not leave the fond admiring soul,
Who did declare, when calmer reason rul'd,
Thou hadst a pretty leg.

Ros. Marry, thou hast the better of me there.

5th Mask. And more ; I'll pledge to thee my honest word,
That when your noble swainship shall bestow
More faithful homage on the simple maid,
Who loves you with sincerity and truth,
Than on the changeful and capricious tyrant,
Who mocking leads you like a trammell'd ass,
My studied woman's wiles I'll lay aside,
And such a one become.

Ros. Well spoke, brave lady, I will follow thee.
(*follows her to the corner of the stage.*)
Now on my life these ears of mine I'd give,
To have but one look of that little face,
Where such a biting tongue doth hold its court
To keep the fools in awe. Nay, nay, unmask :
I'm sure thou hast a pair of wicked eyes,
A short and saucy nose : now pri'thee do.
(*unmasking.*)

Alb. (*unmasking.*) Well, hast thou guess'd me right ?

Ros. (*bowing low.*) Wild freedom, chang'd to most profound respect,
Doth make an awkward booby of me now.

Alb. I've join'd your frolic with a good intent,
For much I wish'd to gain your private ear.

The time is precious, and I must be short.

Ros. On me your slightest word more pow'r will have,
Most honour'd lady, than a conn'd oration.
Thou art the only one of all thy sex,
Who wearst thy years with such a winning grace,
Thou art the more admir'd the more thou fad'st.

Alb. I thank your lordship for these courteous words;
But to my purpose—You are Basil's friend:
Be friendly to him then, and warn him well
This court to leave, nor be allur'd to stay;
For if he does, there's mischief waits him here
May prove the bane of all his future days.
Remember this, I must no longer stay.
God bless your friend and you: I love you both.
[EXIT.

Ros. (*alone.*) What may this warning mean? I had my fears.
There's something hatching which I know not of.
I've lost all spirit for this masking now.
(*throwing away his papers and his willows.*)
Away ye scraps! I have no need of you.
I would I knew what garment Basil wears:
I watch'd him, yet he did escape my sight;
But I must search again and find him out. [EXIT.

Enter BASIL *much agitated, with his mask in his hand.*

Bas. In vain I've sought her, follow'd ev'ry form

Where aught appear'd of dignity or grace:
I've listen'd to the tone of ev'ry voice;
I've watch'd the entrance of each female mask,
My flutt'ring heart rous'd like a startled hare,
With the imagined rustling of her robes,
At ev'ry dame's approach. Deceitful night,
How art thou spent! where are thy promis'd joys?
How much of thee is gone? O spiteful fate!
And yet within the compass of these walls
Somewhere she is, altho' to me she is not.
Some other eye doth gaze upon her form,
Some other ear doth listen to her voice;
Some happy fav'rite doth enjoy the bliss
My spiteful stars deny.
Disturber of my soul! what veil conceals thee?
What dev'lish spell is o'er this cursed hour?
O! heav'ns and earth where art thou!

Enter a Mask *in the dress of a female conjurer.*

Mask. Methinks thou art impatient, valiant soldier:
Thy wound doth gall thee sorely; is it so?
Bas. Away, away! I cannot fool with thee.
Mask. I have some potent drugs may ease thy smart.
Where is thy wound? is't here?
(*pointing to the bandage on his arm.*)
Bas. Poo, Poo, begone!
Thou canst do nought — 'tis in my head, my heart —
'Tis ev'ry where, where med'cine cannot cure.

Mask. If wounded in the heart, it is a wound
Which some ungrateful fair-one hath inflicted,
And I may conjure something for thy good.

Bas. Ah! if thou could'st! what, must I fool with thee?

Mask. Thou must awhile, and be examin'd too.
What kind of woman did the wicked deed?

Bas. I cannot tell thee. In her presence still
My mind in such a wild delight hath been,
I could not pause to picture out her beauty,
Yet nought of woman e'er was form'd so fair.

Mask. Art thou a soldier, and no weapon bear'st
To send her wound for wound?

Bas. Alas! she shoots from such a hopeless height,
No dart of mine hath plume to mount so far;
None but a prince may dare.

Mask. But if thou hast no hope, thou hast no love.

Bas. I love, and yet in truth I had no hope,
But that she might at least with some good will,
Some gentle pure regard, some secret kindness,
Within her dear remembrance give me place.
This was my all of hope, but it is flown:
For she regards me not: despises, scorns me:
Scorns, I must say it too, a noble heart,
That would have bled for her.
(*Mask, discovering herself to be* Victoria, *by speaking in her true voice.*) O! no, she does not.

[EXIT *hastily in confusion.*

Bas. (*stands for a moment rivetted to the spot, then holds up both his hands in an ecstacy.*)
It is herself! it is her blessed self!
O! what a fool am I, that had no power
To follow her, and urge th' advantage on.
Begone, unmanly fears! I must be bold.
[EXIT *after her.*

A Dance of Masks.

Enter DUKE *and* GAURIECIO, *unmasked.*

Duke. This revelry, methinks, goes gaily on.
The hour is late, and yet your friend returns not.
Gaur. He will return ere long — nay, there he comes.

Enter GENTLEMAN.

Duke. Does all go well? (*going close up to him.*)
Gent. All as your grace could wish.
For now the poison works, and the stung soldiers
Rage o'er their cups, and, with fire-kindled eyes,
Swear vengeance on the chief who would betray them.
That Frederick too, the discontented man
Of whom your highness was so lately told,
Swallows the bait, and does his part most bravely.
Gauriecio counsel'd well to keep him blind,
Nor with a bribe attempt him. On my soul!
He is so fiery he had spurn'd us else,
And ruin'd all the plot.
Duke. Speak softly, friend — I'll hear it all in private.
A gay and careless face we now assume.

DUKE, GAUR. *and* GENT. *retire into the inner apartment, appearing to laugh and talk gaily to the different Masks as they pass them.*

Re-enter VICTORIA *followed by* BASIL.

Vict. Forbear, my Lord, these words offend mine ear.

Bas. Yet let me but this once, this once offend,
Nor thus with thy displeasure punish me;
And if my words against all prudence sin,
O! hear them, as the good of heart do list
To the wild ravings of a soul distraught.

Vict. If I indeed should listen to thy words,
They must not talk of love.

Bas. To be with thee, to speak, to hear thee speak,
To claim the soft attention of thine eye,
I'd be content to talk of any thing,
If it were possible to be with thee,
And think of ought but love.

Vict. I fear, my lord, you have too much presum'd
On those unguarded words, which were in truth
Utter'd at unawares, with little heed,
And urge their meaning far beyond the right.

Bas. I thought, indeed, that they were kindly meant,
As tho' thy gentle breast did kindly feel
Some secret pity for my hopeless pain,
And would not pierce with scorn, ungen'rous scorn,
A heart so deeply stricken.

Vict. So far thou'st read it well.
Bas. Ha! have I well?
Thou dost not hate me then?
Vict. My father comes;
He were displeas'd if he should see thee thus.
Bas. Thou dost not hate me then?
Vict. Away! he'll be displeas'd—I cannot say—
Bas. Well, let him come: it is thyself I fear;
For did destruction thunder o'er my head,
By the dread pow'r of heav'n I would not stir
Till thou hadst answer'd my impatient soul!
Thou dost not hate me?
Vict. Nay, nay, let go thy hold — I cannot hate thee. (*breaks from him and exit.*)
Bas. (*alone.*) Thou canst not hate me! no, thou canst not hate me!
For I love thee so well, so passing well,
With such o'erflowing heart, so very dearly,
That it were sinful not to pay me back
Some small, some kind return.

Enter MIRANDO, *dressed like* Cupid.

Mir. Bless thee, brave soldier.
Bas. What say'st thou, pretty child! what playful fair
Has deck'd thee out in this fantastick guise?
Mir. It was Victoria's self; it was the princess.
Bas. Thou art her fav'rite then?
Mir. They say I am:
And now, between ourselves, I'll tell thee, soldier,
I think in very truth she loves me well.

Such merry little songs she teaches me —
Sly riddles too, and when I'm laid to rest,
Oft times on tip-toe near my couch she steals,
And lifts the cov'ring so, to look upon me.
And oftentimes I feign as tho' I slept ;
For then her warm lips to my cheeks she lays,
And pats me softly with her fair white hands ;
And then I laugh, and thro' mine eye-lids peep,
And then she tickles me, and calls me cheat ;
And then we do so laugh, ha, ha, ha, ha !

Bas. What does she even so, thou happiest child ?
And have those rosy cheeks been press'd so dearly ?
Delicious urchin ! I will kiss thee too.
(*takes him eagerly up in his arms, and kisses him.*)

Mir. No, let me down, thy kisses are so rough,
So furious rough — she doth not kiss me so.

Bas. Sweet boy, where is thy chamber ? by Victoria's ?

Mir. Hard by her own.

Bas. Then will I come beneath thy window soon ;
And, if I could, some pretty song I'd sing,
To lull thee to thy rest.

Mir. O no, thou must not ! 'tis a frightful place :
It is the church-yard of the neighb'ring dome.
The princess loves it for the lofty trees,

Whose spreading branches shade her chamber walls :
So do not I ; for, when 'tis dark o'nights,
Goblins howl there, and ghosts rise thro' the ground.
I hear them many a time when I'm a bed,
And hide beneath the cloaths my cow'ring head.
O ! is it not a frightful thing, my lord,
To sleep alone i' the dark ?

Bas. Poor harmless child ! thy prate is wonderous sweet.

Enter a group of Masks.

1*st Mask.* What dost thou here, thou little truant boy ?
Come play thy part with us.

Masks *place* MIRANDO *in the middle, and range themselves round him.*

SONG. — A GLEE.

Child, with many a childish wile,
Timid look, and blushing smile,
Downy wings to steal thy way,
Gilded bow, and quiver gay,
Who in thy simple mien would trace
The tyrant of the human race ?

Who is he whose flinty heart
Hath not felt the flying dart ?
Who is he that from the wound
Hath not pain and pleasure found ?
Who is he that hath not shed
Curse and blessing on thy head ?

Ah Love ! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
A restless life have they who wear thy chain !
Ah Love ! our weal, our woe, our bliss, our bane,
More hapless still are they who never felt thy pain !

All the Masks dance round Cupid. Then enter a band of satyrs, who frighten away Love and his votaries ; and conclude the scene, dancing in a grotesque manner.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *The Street before* BASIL'S *Lodging.*

Enter ROSINBERG *and two* Officers.

Ros. (*speaking as he enters.*) Unless we find
him quickly, all is lost.
1*st Off.* His very guards, methinks, have left
their post
To join the mutiny.
Ros. (*knocking very loud.*) Holla ! who's there
within ? confound this door !
It will not ope. O for a giant's strength !
Holla, holla, within ! will no one hear ?

Enter a Porter *from the house.*

Ros. (*eagerly to the Porter.*) Is he return'd ?
is he return'd ? not yet !
Thy face doth tell me so.
Port. Not yet, my Lord.
Ros. Then let him ne'er return ! —

Tumult, disgrace, and ruin have their way!
I'll search for him no more.

Port. He hath been absent all the night, my lord.

Ros. I know he hath.

2nd Off. And yet 'tis possible
He may have enter'd by the secret door;
And now, perhaps, in deepest sleep entranc'd
Is dead to ev'ry sound.

(Ros. *without speaking, rushes into the house, and the rest follow him.*)

Enter BASIL.

Bas. The blue air of the morning pinches keenly.
Beneath her window all the chilly night,
I felt it not. Ah! night has been my day;
And the pale lamp which from her chamber gleam'd,
Has to the breeze a warmer temper lent
Than the red burning east.

Re-enter ROSINBERG, *&c. from the house.*

Ros. Himself! himself! he's here! he's here! O Basil!
What fiend at such a time could lead thee forth?

Bas. What is the matter which disturbs you thus?

Ros. Matter that would a wiser man disturb.
Treason's abroad: thy men have mutinied.

Bas. It is not so; thy wits have mutinied,
And left their sober station in thy brain.

1st Off. Indeed, my Lord, he speaks in sober earnest.
Some secret enemies have been employ'd
To fill your troops with strange imaginations :
As tho' their gen'ral would, for selfish gain,
Their gen'rous valour urge to des'prate deeds.
All to a man, assembled on the ramparts,
Now threaten vengeance, and refuse to march.
Bas. What ! think they vilely of me ? threaten too !
O ! most ungen'rous, most unmanly thought !
Didst thou attempt (*to* Ros.) to reason with their folly ?
Folly it is ; baseness it cannot be.
Ros. Yes, truly, I did reason with a storm,
And bid it cease to rage. ——
Their eyes look fire on him who questions them:
The hollow murmurs of their mutter'd wrath
Sound dreadful thro' the dark extended ranks,
Like subterraneous grumblings of an earthquake.
———————— The vengeful hurricane
Does not with such fantastick writhings toss
The woods' green boughs, as does convulsive rage
Their forms with frantick gestures agitate.
Around the chief of hell such legions throng'd,
To bring back curse and discord on creation.
Bas. Nay they are men, altho' impassion'd ones.
I'll go to them —
Ros. And we will stand by thee.

My sword is thine against ten thousand strong,
If it should come to this.
Bas. No, never, never!
There is no mean: I with my soldiers must
Or their commander or their victim prove.
But are my officers all staunch and faithful?
Ros. All but that devil, Fred'rick ——
He, disappointed, left his former corps,
Where he, in truth, had been too long neglected,
Thinking he should all on the sudden rise,
Brom Basil's well-known love of valiant men;
And now, because it still must be deferr'd,
He thinks you seek from envy to depress him,
And burns to be reveng'd.
Bas. Well, well——This grieves me too ——
But let us go. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

The ramparts of the Town. The Soldiers are discovered, drawn up in a disorderly manner, hollaing and speaking big, and clashing their arms tumultuously.

1*st Sol.* No, comrade, no, hell gape and swallow me,
If I do budge for such most dev'lish orders!
2*d Sol.* Huzza! brave comrades! Who says otherwise?
3*d Sol.* No one, huzza! confound all treach'rous leaders!
(*The soldiers huzza and clash their arms.*)

5th Sol. Heav'n dart its fiery light'ning on his head!
We're men, we are not cattle to be slaughter'd!
2d Sol. They who do long to caper high in air,
Into a thousand bloody fragments blown,
May follow our brave gen'ral.
1st Sol. Curse his name!
I've fought for him till my strain'd nerves have crack'd!
2d Sol. We will command ourselves: for Milan, comrades.
5th Sol. Ay, ay, for Milan, valiant hearts, huzza!

(*All the Soldiers cast up their caps in the air, and huzza.*)

2d Sol. Yes, comrades, tempting booty waits us there,
And easy service: keep good hearts, my soldiers!
The gen'ral comes, good hearts! no flinching, boys!
Look bold and fiercely: we're the masters now.

(*They all clash their arms and put on a fierce threatening aspect to receive their General, who now enters, followed by* Rosinberg *and Officers.* Basil *walks close along the front ranks of the Soldiers, looking at them very steadfastly; then retires a few paces back, and raising his arm, speaks with a very full loud voice.*)

Bas. How is it, soldiers, that I see you thus,
Assembled here, unsummon'd by command?

(*A confused murmur is heard amongst the Soldiers; some of them call out*)

But we command ourselves; we wait no orders.

(*A confused noise of voices is heard, and one louder than the rest calls out*)

Must we be butcher'd, for that we are brave!

(*A loud clamour and clashing of arms, then several voices call out*)

Damn hidden treach'ry! we defy thy orders.
Fred'rick shall lead us now ———————

(*Other voices call out*)

We'll march where'er we list, for Milan march.

Bas. (*waving his hand, and beckoning them to be silent, speaks with a very loud voice,*)

Yes, march where'er ye list: for Milan march.

Sol. Hear him, hear him!

(*The murmur ceases — a short pause.*)

Bas. Yes, march where'er ye list: for Milan march:
But as banditti, not as soldiers go;
For on this spot of earth I will disband,
And take from you the rank and name of soldiers.

(*A great clamour amongst the ranks —— some call out*)

What wear we arms for?

(*Others call out*)

No, he dares not do it.

(*One voice very loud*)

Disband us at thy peril, treach'rous Basil!

(*Several of the soldiers brandish their arms, and*

threaten to attack him; the officers gather round Basil, *and draw their swords to defend him.*)

Bas. Put up your swords, my friends, it must not be.
I thank your zeal, I'll deal with them alone.

Ros. What, shall we calmly stand and see thee butcher'd?

Bas. (*very earnestly.*) Put up, my friends, (*Officers still persist.*) What! are you rebels too?
Will no one here his gen'ral's voice obey?
I do command you to put up your swords.
Retire, and at a distance wait th' event.
Obey, or henceforth be no friends of mine.

(*Officers retire, very unwillingly.* Basil *waives them off with his hand till they are all gone, then walks up to the front of his soldiers, who still hold themselves in a threatening posture.*)

Soldiers! we've fought together in the field,
And bravely fought: i' the face of horrid death,
At honour's call, I've led you dauntless on;
Nor do I know the man of all your bands,
That ever poorly from the trial shrunk,
Or yielded to the foe contended space.
Am I the meanest then of all my troops,
That thus ye think, with base unmanly threats,
To move me now? Put up those paltry weapons;
They edgeless are to him who fears them not:
Rocks have been shaken from the solid base;
But what shall move a firm and dauntless mind?
Put up your swords, or dare the threaten'd deed—
Obey, or murder me. ——

(*A confused murmur — some of the soldiers call out*)

March us to Milan, and we will obey thee.

(*Others call out*)

Ay, march us there, and be our leader still.

Bas. Nay, if I am your leader, I'll command ye;

And where I do command, there shall you go,
But not to Milan. No, nor shall you deviate
E'en half a furlong from your destin'd way,
To seize the golden booty of the east.
Think not to gain, or temporise with me;
For should I this day's mutiny survive,
Much as I've lov'd you, soldiers, ye shall find me
Still more relentless in pursuit of vengeance;
Tremendous, cruel, military vengeance.
There is no mean — a desp'rate game ye play;
Therefore, I say, obey, or murder me.
Do as ye will, but do it manfully.
He is a coward who doth threaten me:
The man who slays me, but an angry soldier;
Acting in passion, like the frantic son,
Who struck his sire and wept.

(*Soldiers call out*) It was thyself who sought to murder us.

1*st Sol.* You have unto the Emp'rour pledg'd your faith,

To lead us foremost in all desp'rate service:
You have agreed to sell your soldiers' blood,
And we have shed our dearest blood for you.

Bas. Hear me, my soldiers ——

2d Sol. No, hear him not, he means to cozen you.
Fred'rick will do you right ———
(*Endeavouring to stir up a noise and confusion amongst them.*)
Bas. What cursed fiend art thou, cast out from hell
To spirit up rebellion? damned villain!
(*Seizes upon 2d soldier, drags him out from the ranks, and wrests his arms from him; then takes a pistol from his side, and holds it to his head.*)
Stand there, damn'd meddling villain, and be silent;
For if thou utt'rest but a single word,
A cough or hem, to cross me in my speech,
I'll send thy cursed spirit from the earth,
To bellow with the damn'd!
(*The soldiers keep a dead silence—after a pause,* Basil *resumes his speech.*)
Listen to me, my soldiers.——
You say that I am to the Emp'rour pledg'd
To lead you foremost in all desp'rate service,
For now you call it not the path of glory;
And if in this I have offended you,
I do indeed repent me of the crime.
But new from battles, where my native troops
So bravely fought, I felt me proud at heart,
And boasted of you, boasted foolishly.
I said, fair glory's palm ye would not yield
To e'er the bravest legion train'd to arms.
I swore the meanest man of all my troops

Would never shrink before an armed host,
If honour bade him stand. My royal master
Smil'd at the ardour of my heedless words,
And promis'd when occasion claim'd our arms,
To put them to the proof.
But ye do peace, and ease, and booty love,
Safe and ignoble service — be it so —
Forgive me that I did mistake you thus,
But do not earn with savage mutiny,
Your own destruction. We'll for Pavia march,
To join the royal army near its walls;
And there with blushing forehead will I plead,
That ye are men with warlike service worn,
Requiring ease and rest. Some other chief,
Whose cold blood boils not at the trumpet's sound,
Will in your rearward station head you then,
And so, my friends, we'll part. As for myself,
A volunteer, unheeded in the ranks,
I'll rather fight, with brave men for my fellows,
Than be the leader of a sordid band.

(*A great murmur rises amongst the ranks, soldiers call out*)

We will not part! no, no, we will not part!

(*All call out together*)

We will not part! be thou our gen'ral still.

Bas. How can I be your gen'ral? ye obey
As caprice moves you; I must be obey'd
As honest men against themselves perform
A sacred oath. —
Some other chief will more indulgent prove —
You're weary grown—I've been too hard a master.

Soldiers. Thyself, and only thee, will we obey.

Bas. But if you follow me, yourselves ye pledge
Unto no easy service: — hardships, toils,
The hottest dangers of most dreadful fight
Will be your portion; and when all is o'er,
Each, like his gen'ral, must contented be
Home to return again, a poor brave soldier.
How say ye now? I spread no tempting lure —
A better fate than this, I promise none.

Soldiers. We'll follow Basil.

Bas. What token of obedience will ye give?
(*A deep pause.*)
Soldiers, lay down your arms!
(*They all lay down their arms.*)
If any here are weary of the service,
Now let them quit the ranks, and they shall have
A free discharge, and passport to their homes;
And from my scanty fortune I'll make good
The well-earn'd pay their royal master owes them.
Let those who follow me their arms resume,
(*they all resume their arms.*)
(Basil, *holding up his hands.*) High heaven be prais'd!
I had been griev'd to part with you, my soldiers.
Here is a letter from my gracious master,
With offers of preferment in the north,
Most high preferment, which I did refuse,
For that I would not leave my gallant troops.
(*Takes out a letter, and throws it amongst them.*)

(*A great commotion amongst the soldiers; many of them quit their ranks, and crowd about him, calling out*)

Our gallant gen'ral!

(*Others call out*)

We'll spend our hearts' blood for thee, noble Basil!

Bas. And so you thought me false? this bites to the quick!

My soldiers thought me false!

(*They all quit their ranks, and crowd eagerly around him.* Basil, *waving them off with his hands.*)

Away, away, you have disgusted me!

(*Soldiers retire to their ranks.*)

'Tis well — retire, and hold yourselves prepar'd
To march upon command; nor meet again
Till you are summon'd by the beat of drum.
Some secret enemy has tamper'd with you,
For yet I will not think that in these ranks
There moves a man who wears a traitor's heart.

(*The soldiers begin to march off, and musick strikes up.*)

Bas. (*holding up his hand.*) Cease, cease, triumphant sounds,
Which our brave fathers, men without reproach,
Rais'd in the hour of triumph! but this hour
To us no glory brings —
Then silent be your march — ere that again
Our steps to glorious strains like these shall move,
A day of battle o'er our heads must pass,

And blood be shed to wash out this day's stain.
[EXEUNT *soldiers, silent and dejected.*

Enter FREDERICK, *who starts back on seeing* BASIL *alone.*

Bas. Advance, lieutenant; wherefore shrink ye back?
I've ever seen you bear your head erect,
And front your man, though arm'd with frowning death.
Have you done aught the valiant should not do?
I fear you have. (Fred. *looks confused.*)
With secret art, and false insinuation,
The simple untaught soldiers to seduce
From their sworn duty, might become the base,
Become the coward well; but O! what villain
Had the dark pow'r t' engage thy valiant worth
In such a work as this!

Fred. Is Basil, then, so lavish of his praise
On a neglected pitiful subsaltern?
It were a libel on his royal master;
A foul reproach upon fair fortune cast,
To call me valiant:
And surely he has been too much their debtor
To mean them this rebuke.

Bas. Is nature then so sparing of her gifts,
That it is wonderful when they are found
Where fortune smiles not?
Thou art by nature brave, and so am I;
But in those distant ranks moves there not one
(*Pointing off the stage.*)

Of high ennobled soul, by nature form'd
A hero and commander, who will yet
In his untrophied grave forgotten lie
With meaner men? I dare be sworn there does.
Fred. What need of words? I crave of thee no favour.
I have offended 'gainst arm'd law, offended,
And shrink not from my doom.
Bas. I know thee well, I know thou fear'st not death;
On scaffold or in field with dauntless breast
Thou wilt engage him; and, if thy proud soul,
In sullen obstinacy, scorns all grace,
E'en be it so. But if with manly gratitude
Thou truly canst receive a brave man's pardon,
Thou hast it freely.
Fred. It must not be. I've been thine enemy—
I've been unjust to thee —
Bas. I know thou hast;
But thou art brave, and I forgive thee all.
Fred. My lord! my gen'ral! Oh, I cannot speak!
I cannot live and be the wretch I am!
Bas. But thou canst live and be an honest man
From errour turn'd,—canst live and be my friend.
(*Raising* Fred. *from the ground.*)
Forbear, forbear! see where our friends advance:
They must not think thee suing for a pardon;
That would disgrace us both. Yet, ere they come,
Tell me, if that thou mayst with honour tell,
What did seduce thee from thy loyal faith?

Fred. No cunning traitor did my faith attempt,
For then I had withstood him: but of late,
I know not how — a bad and restless spirit
Has work'd within my breast, and made me wretched.
I've lent mine ear to foolish idle tales,
Of very zealous, tho' but recent friends.
Bas. Softly, our friends approach — of this again. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.

An Apartment in BASIL'S *Lodgings. Enter* BASIL *and* ROSINBERG.

Ros. Thank heaven I am now alone with thee.
Last night I sought thee with an anxious mind,
And curs'd thine ill-tim'd absence. —
There's treason in this most deceitful court,
Against thee plotting, and this morning's tumult
Hath been its damn'd effect.
Bas. Nay, nay, my friend!
The nature of man's mind too well thou know'st,
To judge as vulgar hoodwink'd statesmen do;
Who, ever with their own poor wiles misled,
Believe each popular tumult or commotion
Must be the work of deep-laid policy.
Poor, mean, mechanick souls, who little know
A few short words of energetick force,
Some powerful passion on the sudden rous'd,
The animating sight of something noble,
Some fond trait of the mem'ry finely wak'd,

A sound, a simple song without design,
In revolutions, tumults, wars, rebellions,
All grand events, have oft effected more
Than deepest cunning of their paltry art.
Some drunken soldier, eloquent with wine,
Who loves not fighting, hath harangued his mates,
For they in truth some hardships have endur'd :
Wherefore in this should we suspect the court ?

Ros. Ah ! there is something, friend, in Mantua's court,
Will make the blackest trait of barefac'd treason
Seem fair and guiltless to thy partial eye.

Bas. Nay, 'tis a weakness in thee, Rosinberg,
Which makes thy mind so jealous and distrustful.
Why should the duke be false ?

Ros. Because he is a double, crafty prince —
Because I've heard it rumour'd secretly,
That he in some dark treaty is engag'd,
Ev'n with our master's enemy the Frank.

Bas. And so thou think'st —

Ros. Nay, hear me to the end.
Last night that good and honourable dame,
Noble Albini, with most friendly art,
From the gay clam'rous throng my steps beguil'd,
Unmask'd before me, and with earnest grace
Entreated me, if I were Basil's friend,
To tell him hidden danger waits him here,
And warn him earnestly this court to leave.
She said she lov'd thee much ; and hadst thou seen
How anxiously she urg'd —

Bas. (*interrupting him.*) By heav'n and earth,

There is a ray of light breaks thro' thy tale,
And I could leap like madmen in their freaks,
So blessed is the gleam! Ah! no, no, no!
It cannot be! alas, it cannot be!
Yet didst thou say she urg'd it earnestly?
She is a woman, who avoids all share
In secret politicks; one only charge
Her int'rest claims, Victoria's guardian friend —
And she would have me hence — it must be so.
O! would it were! how saidst thou, gentle Rosinberg?
She urg'd it earnestly — how did she urge it?
Nay, pri'thee do not stare upon me thus,
But tell me all her words. What said she else?

Ros. O Basil! I could laugh to see thy folly,
But that thy weakness doth provoke me so.
Most admirable, brave, determin'd man!
So well, so lately tried, what art thou now?
A vain deceitful thought transports thee thus.
Thinkst thou —

Bas. I will not tell thee what I think.

Ros. But I can guess it well, and it deceives thee.
Leave this detested place, this fatal court,
Where dark deceitful cunning plots thy ruin.
A soldier's duty calls thee loudly hence.
The time is critical. How wilt thou feel
When they shall tell these tidings in thine ear,
That brave Piscaro, and his royal troops,
Our valiant fellows, have the en'my fought,
Whilst we, so near at hand, lay loit'ring here?

Bas. Thou dost disturb thy brain with fancied fears.
Our fortunes rest not on a point so nice,
That one short day should be of all this moment;
And yet this one short day will be to me
Worth years of other time.
Ros. Nay, rather say,
A day to darken all thy days beside.
Confound the fatal beauty of that woman,
Which hath bewitch'd thee so!
Bas. 'Tis most ungen'rous
To push me thus with rough unsparing hand,
Where but the slightest touch is felt so dearly.
It is unfriendly.
Ros. God knows my heart! I would not give thee pain;
But it disturbs me, Basil, vexes me,
To see thee so enthralled by a woman.
If she is fair, others are fair as she.
Some other face will like emotions raise,
When thou canst better play a lover's part:
But for the present, — fye upon it, Basil!
Bas. What, is it possible thou hast beheld,
Hast tarried by her too, her converse shar'd,
Yet talk'st as tho' she were a common fair one,
Such as a man may fancy and forget?
Thou art not, sure, so dull and brutish grown:
It is not so; thou dost belie thy thoughts,
And vainly try'st to gain me with the cheat.
Ros. So thinks each lover of the maid he loves,
Yet, in their lives, some many maidens love.

Fye on it! leave this town, and be a soldier!

Bas. Have done, have done! why dost thou bate me thus?

Thy words become disgusting to me, Rosinberg.
What claim hast thou my actions to controul?
I'll Mantua leave when it is fit I should.

Ros. Then, 'faith! 'tis fitting thou shouldst leave it now;

Ay, on the instant. Is't not desperation
To stay, and hazard ruin on thy fame,
Tho' yet uncheer'd e'en by that tempting lure,
No lover breathes without? thou hast no hope.

Bas. What, dost thou mean — curse on the paltry thought!

That I should count and bargain with my heart,
Upon the chances of unstinted favour,
As little souls their base-bred fancies feed?
O! were I conscious that within her breast
I held some portion of her dear regard,
Tho' pent for life within a prison's walls,
Where thro' my grate I yet might sometimes see
E'en but her shadow sporting in the sun;
Tho' plac'd by fate where some obstructing bound,
Some deep impassable between us roll'd,
And I might yet from some high tow'ring cliff
Perceive her distant mansion from afar,
Or mark its blue smoke rising eve and morn;
Nay, tho' within the circle of the moon
Some spell did fix her, never to return,
And I might wander in the hours of night,
And upward turn my ever-gazing eye,

Fondly to mark upon its varied disk
Some little spot that might her dwelling be;
My fond, my fixed heart would still adore,
And own no other love. Away, away!
How canst thou say to one who loves like me,
Thou hast no hope?

Ros. But with such hope, my friend, how stand thy fears?

Are they so well refin'd? how wilt thou bear
Ere long to hear, that some high-favour'd prince
Has won her heart, her hand, has married her?
Tho' now unshackled, will it always be?

Bas. By heav'n thou dost contrive but to torment,

And hast a pleasure in the pain thou giv'st!
There is malignity in what thou say'st.

Ros. No, not malignity, but kindness, Basil,
That fain would save thee from the yawning gulf,
To which blind passion guides thy heedless steps.

Bas. Go, rather save thyself
From the weak passion which has seiz'd thy breast,
T' assume authority with sage-like brow,
And shape my actions by thine own caprice.
I can direct myself.

Ros. Yes, do thyself,
And let no artful woman do it for thee.

Bas. I scorn thy thought: it is beneath my scorn:

It is of meanness sprung — an artful woman!
O! she has all the loveliness of heav'n,
And all its goodness too!

Ros. I mean not to impute dishonest arts,
I mean not to impute —
Bas. No, 'faith, thou canst not.
Ros. What, can I not? their arts all women have.
But now of this no more; it moves thee greatly.
Yet once again, as a most loving friend,
Let me conjure thee, if thou prizest honour,
A soldier's fair repute, a hero's fame,
What noble spirits love, and well I know
Full dearly dost thou prize them, leave this place,
And give thy soldiers orders for the march.
Bas. Nay, since thou must assume it o'er me thus,
Be gen'ral, and command my soldiers too.
Ros. What, hath this passion in so short a space,
O! curses on it! so far chang'd thee, Basil,
That thou dost take with such ungentle warmth,
The kindly freedom of thine ancient friend?
Methinks the beauty of a thousand maids
Would not have mov'd me thus to treat my friend,
My best, mine earliest friend!
Bas. Say kinsman rather; chance has link'd us so:
Our blood is near, our hearts are sever'd far;
No act of choice did e'er unite our souls.
Men most unlike we are; our thoughts unlike;
My breast disowns thee—thou'rt no friend of mine.
Ros. Ah! have I then so long, so dearly lov'd thee;
So often, with an elder brother's care,
Thy childish rambles tended, shar'd thy sports;
Fill'd up by stealth thy weary school-boy's task;

Taught thy young arms thine earliest feats of
strength;
With boastful pride thine early rise beheld
In glory's paths, contented then to fill
A second place, so I might serve with thee;
And say'st thou now, I am no friend of thine?
Well, be it so; I am thy kinsman then,
And by that title will I save thy name
From danger of disgrace. Indulge thy will.
I'll lay me down and feign that I am sick:
And yet I shall not feign — I shall not feign;
For thy unkindness makes me so indeed.
It will be said that Basil tarried here
To save his friend, for so they'll call me still;
Nor will dishonour fall upon thy name
For such a kindly deed. —

(Basil *walks up and down in great agitation, then stops, covers his face with his hands, and seems to be overcome.* Rosinberg *looks at him earnestly.*)

O blessed heav'n, he weeps!
(*Runs up to him, and catches him in his arms.*)
O Basil! I have been too hard upon thee.
And is it possible I've mov'd thee thus?

Bas. (*in a convulsed broken voice.*) I will renounce — I'll leave —

Ros. What says my Basil?

Bas. I'll Mantua leave — I'll leave this seat of bliss —
This lovely woman — tear my heart in twain —

Cast off at once my little span of joy —
Be wretched—miserable—whate'er thou wilt—
Dost thou forgive me?

Ros. O my friend! my friend!
I love thee now more than I ever lov'd thee.
I must be cruel to thee to be kind:
Each pang I see thee feel strikes thro' my heart;
Then spare us both, call up thy noble spirit,
And meet the blow at once. Thy troops are ready —
Let us depart, nor loose another hour.

(Basil *shrinks from his arms, and looks at him with somewhat of an upbraiding, at the same time a sorrowful look.*)

Bas. Nay, put me not to death upon the instant;
I'll see her once again, and then depart.

Ros. See her but once again, and thou art ruin'd!
It must not be — if thou regardest me —

Bas. Well then, it shall not be. Thou hast no mercy!

Ros. Ah! thou wilt bless me all thine after-life
For what now seems to thee so merciless.

Bas. (*sitting down very dejectedly.*) Mine after-life! what is mine after-life?
My day is clos'd! the gloom of night is come!
A hopeless darkness settles o'er my fate.
I've seen the last look of her heavenly eyes;
I've heard the last sounds of her blessed voice;
I've seen her fair form from my sight depart:
My doom is clos'd!

Ros. (*hanging over him with pity and affection.*)
Alas! my friend!

Bas. In all her lovely grace she disappear'd,
Ah! little thought I never to return!

Ros. Why so desponding? think of warlike glory.
The fields of fair renown are still before thee;
Who would not burn such noble fame to earn?

Bas. What now are arms, or fair renown to me?
Strive for it those who will — and yet, a while,
Welcome rough war; with all thy scenes of blood; (*starting from his seat.*)
Thy roaring thunders, and thy clashing steel!
Welcome once more! what have I now to do
But play the brave man o'er again, and die?

Enter ISABELLA.

Isab. (*to* Bas.) My princess bids me greet you, noble Count: —

Bas. (*starting.*) What dost thou say?

Ros. Damn this untimely message!

Isab. The princess bids me greet you, noble Count:
In the cool grove, hard by the southern gate,
She with her train —

Bas. What, she indeed, herself?

Isab. Herself, my lord, and she requests to see you.

Bas. Thank heav'n for this! I will be there anon.

Ros. (*taking hold of him.*) Stay, stay, and do not be a madman still.

Bas. Let go thy hold: what, must I be a brute,
A very brute to please thee? no, by heav'n!
(*Breaks from him, and* EXIT.)

Ros. (*striking his forehead.*) All lost again! ill fortune light upon her!
(*Turning eagerly to* Isab.)
And so thy virtuous mistress sends thee here
To make appointments, honourable dame?

Isab. Not so, my lord, you must not call it so:
The court will hunt to-morrow, and Victoria
Would have your noble gen'ral of her train.

Ros. Confound these women, and their artful snares,
Since men will be such fools!

Isab. Yes, grumble at our empire as you will —

Ros. What, boast ye of it? empire do ye call it?
It is your shame! a short-liv'd tyranny,
That ends at last in hatred and contempt.

Isab. Nay, but some women do so wisely rule,
Their subjects never from the yoke escape.

Ros. Some women do, but they are rarely found.
There is not one in all your paltry court
Hath wit enough for the ungen'rous task.
'Faith! of you all, not one, but brave Albini,
And she disdains it — Good be with you, lady!
(*Going.*)

Isab. O would I could but touch that stubborn heart.

How dearly should he pay for this hour's scorn!

[EXEUNT *severally.*

SCENE IV.

A Summer Apartment in the Country, the windows of which look to a forest. Enter VICTORIA *in a hunting dress, followed by* ALBINI *and* ISABELLA, *speaking as they enter.*

Vict. (*to* Alb.) And so you will not share our sport to-day?

Alb. My days of frolick should ere this be o'er,
But thou, my charge, hast kept me youthful still.
I should most gladly go; but, since the dawn,
A heavy sickness hangs upon my heart;
I cannot hunt to-day.

Vict. I'll stay at home and nurse thee, dear Albini.

Alb. No, no, thou shalt not stay.

Vict. Nay, but I will.
I cannot follow to the cheerful horn,
Whilst thou art sick at home.

Alb. Not very sick.
Rather than thou shouldst stay, my gentle child,
I'll mount my horse, and go e'en as I am.

Vict. Nay, then I'll go, and soon return again.
Meanwhile, do thou be careful of thyself.

Isab. Hark, hark! the shrill horns call us to the field:
Your highness hears it? (*musick without.*)

Vict. Yes, my Isabella;

I hear it, and methinks e'en at the sound
I vault already on my leathern seat,
And feel the fiery steed beneath me shake
His mantled sides, and paw the fretted earth;
Whilst I aloft, with gay equestrian grace,
The low salute of gallant lords return,
Who, waiting round with eager watchful eye,
And reined steeds, the happy moments seize.
O! didst thou never hear, my Isabell,
How nobly Basil in the field becomes
His fiery courser's back?

Isab. They say most gracefully.

Alb. What, is the valiant Count not yet departed?

Vict. You would not have our gallant Basil go
When I have bid him stay? not so, Albini.

Alb. Fye! reigns that spirit still so strongly in thee,
Which vainly covets all men's admiration,
And is to others cause of cruel pain?
O! would thou couldst subdue it!

Vict. My gentle friend, thou shouldst not be severe:
For now in truth I love not admiration
As I was wont to do; in truth I do not.
But yet, this once my woman's heart excuse,
For there is something strange in this man's love,
I never met before, and I must prove it.

Alb. Well, prove it then, be stricken too thyself,
And bid sweet peace of mind a sad farewell.

Vict. O no! that will not be! 'twill peace restore:
For after this, all folly of the kind
Will quite insipid and disgusting seem;
And so I shall become a prudent maid,
And passing wise at last. (*musick heard without.*)
Hark, hark! again!
All good be with you! I'll return ere long.
[EXEUNT Victoria *and* Isabella.

Alb. (*sola.*) Ay, go, and every blessing with thee go,
My most tormenting and most pleasing charge!
Like vapour from the mountain stream art thou,
Which lightly rises on the morning air,
And shifts its fleeting form with ev'ry breeze,
For ever varying, and for ever graceful.
Endearing, gen'rous, bountiful and kind;
Vain, fanciful, and fond of worthless praise;
Courteous and gentle, proud and magnificent:
And yet these adverse qualities in thee,
No dissonance, nor striking contrast make;
For still thy good and amiable gifts
The sober dignity of virtue wear not,
And such a 'witching mien thy follies shew,
They make a very idiot of reproof,
And smile it to disgrace.—
What shall I do with thee?—It grieves me much
To hear Count Basil is not yet departed.
When from the chace he comes, I'll watch his steps,
And speak to him myself.—

O! I could hate her for that poor ambition,
Which silly adoration only claims,
But that I well remember, in my youth
I felt the like—I did not feel it long:
I tore it soon, indignant from my breast,
As that which did degrade a noble mind. [EXIT.

SCENE V.

A very beautiful grove in the forest. Musick and horns heard afar off, whilst huntsmen and dogs appear passing over the stage, at a great distance. Enter VICTORIA *and* BASIL, *as if just alighted from their horses.*

Vict. (*speaking to attendants without.*) Lead on
our horses to the further grove,
And wait us there.—
(*To* Bas.) This spot so pleasing and so fragrant is,
'Twere sacrilege with horses' hoofs to wear
Its velvet turf, where little elfins dance,
And fairies sport beneath the summer's moon:
I love to tread upon it.

Bas. O! I would quit the chariot of a god
For such delightful footing!

Vict. I love this spot.

Bas. It is a spot where one would live and die.

Vict. See, thro' the twisted boughs of those
high elms,
The sun-beams on the bright'ning foliage play,
And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.
Is it not beautiful?

Bas. 'Tis passing beautiful,
To see the sun-beams on the foliage play,
(*In a soft voice.*)
And tinge the scaled bark with ruddy brown.
Vict. And here I've stood full often, and admir'd
The graceful bending, o'er that shady pool,
Of yon green willow, whose fair sweepy boughs
So kiss their image on the glassy plain,
And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream.
Bas. And I too love to see its drooping boughs
So kiss their image on the glassy plain,
And bathe their leafy tresses in the stream.
Vict. My lord, it is uncivil in you thus
My very words with mock'ry to repeat.
Bas. Nay, pardon me, did I indeed repeat.
I meant it not; but when I hear thee speak,
So sweetly dwells thy voice upon mine ear,
My tongue e'en unawares assumes the tone;
As mothers on their lisping infants gaze,
And catch their broken words. I pri'thee, pardon!
Vict. But we must leave this grove: the birds fly low:
This should forebode a storm, and yet o'erhead
The sky, bespread with little downy clouds
Of purest white, would seem to promise peace.
How beautiful those pretty snowy clouds!
Bas. Of a most dazzling brightness!
Vict. Nay, nay, a veil that tempers heaven's brightness,
Of softest, purest white.

Bas. As tho' an angel, in his upward flight,
Had left his mantle floating in mid air.
Vict. Still most unlike a garment; small and sever'd:
(*Turning round, and perceiving that he is gazing at her.*)
But thou regard'st them not.
Bas. Ah! what should I regard, where should I gaze?
For in that far-shot glance, so keenly wak'd,
That sweetly rising smile of admiration,
Far better do I learn how fair heav'n is,
Than if I gaz'd upon the blue serene.
Vict. Remember you have promis'd, gentle Count,
No more to vex me with such foolish words.
Bas. Ah! wherefore should my tongue alone be mute?
When every look and every motion tell,
So plainly tell, and will not be forbid,
That I adore thee, love thee, worship thee!
(Victoria *looks haughty and displeased.*)
Ah! pardon me, I know not what I say.
Ah! frown not thus! I cannot see thee frown.
I'll do whate'er thou wilt, I will be silent:
But, O! a reined tongue, and bursting heart,
Are hard at once to bear.—Wilt thou forgive me?
Vict. We'll think no more of it; we'll quit this spot;
I do repent me that I led thee here.
But 'twas the fav'rite path of a dear friend;

Here many a time we wander'd, arm in arm;
We lov'd this grove, and now that he is absent,
I love to haunt it still. (Basil *starts.*)

Bas. His fav'rite path — a friend — here arm in arm —

(*Clasping his hands, and raising them to his head.*)

Then there is such a one!

(*Drooping his head, and looking distractedly upon the ground.*)

I dream'd not of it.

Vict. (*pretending not to see him.*) That little lane, with woodbine all o'ergrown,
He lov'd so well! — it is a fragrant path,
Is it not, Count?

Bas. It is a gloomy one!

Vict. I have, my lord, been wont to think it cheerful.

Bas. I thought your highness meant to leave this spot?

Vict. I do, and by this lane we'll take our way;
For here he often walk'd with saunt'ring pace,
And listen'd to the woodlark's evening song.

Bas. What, must I on his very footsteps go?
Accursed be the ground on which he trod!

Vict. And is Count Basil so uncourtly grown,
That he would curse my brother to my face?

Bas. Your brother! gracious God! is it your brother?
That dear, that loving friend of whom you spoke,
Is he indeed your brother?

Vict. He is, indeed, my lord.

Bas. Then heaven bless him! all good angels bless him!
I could weep o'er him now, shed blood for him!
I could — O what a foolish heart have I!
(*Walks up and down with a hurried step, tossing about his arms in transport; then stops short, and runs up to* Victoria.)
Is it indeed your brother?

Vict. It is indeed: what thoughts disturb'd thee so?

Bas. I will not tell thee; foolish thoughts they were.
Heav'n bless your brother!

Vict. Ay, heav'n bless him too!
I have but him; would I had two brave brothers,
And thou wert one of them!

Bas. I would fly from thee to earth's utmost bounds,
Were I thy brother —
And yet methinks, I would I had a sister.

Vict. And wherefore would ye so?

Bas. To place her near thee,
The soft companion of thy hours to prove,
And, when far distant, sometimes talk of me.
Thou couldst not chide a gentle sister's cares.
Perhaps, when rumour from the distant war,
Uncertain tales of dreadful slaughter bore,
Thou'dst see the tear hang on her pale wan cheek,
And kindly say, How does it fare with Basil?

Vict. No more of this — indeed there must no more.
A friend's remembrance I will ever bear thee.
But see where Isabella this way comes:
I had a wish to speak with her alone;
Attend us here, for soon will we return,
And then take horse again. [EXIT.

Bas. (*looking after her for some time.*) See with what graceful steps she moves along,
Her lovely form, in ev'ry action lovely!
If but the wind her ruffled garment raise,
It twists it into some light pretty fold,
Which adds new grace. Or should some small mishap,
Some tangling branch, her fair attire derange,
What would in others strange or awkward seem,
But lends to her some wild bewitching charm.
See, yonder does she raise her lovely arm
To pluck the dangling hedge-flow'r as she goes;
And now she turns her head, as tho' she view'd
The distant landscape; now methinks she walks
With doubtful ling'ring steps — will she look back?
Ah, no! yon thicket hides her from my sight.
Bless'd are the eyes that may behold her still,
Nor dread that ev'ry look shall be the last!
And yet she said she would remember me.
I will believe it: Ah! I must believe it,
Or be the saddest soul that sees the light!
But, lo, a messenger, and from the army!
He brings me tidings; grant they may be good!
Till now I never fear'd what man might utter;

I dread his tale, God grant it may be good!

Enter MESSENGER.

From the army?

Mess. Yes, my lord.

Bas. What tidings bring'st thou?

Mess. Th' Imperial army, under brave Piscaro,
Have beat the enemy near Pavia's walls.

Bas. Ha! have they fought? and is the battle o'er?

Mess. Yes, conquer'd; ta'en the French king prisoner,
Who, like a noble, gallant gentleman,
Fought to the last, nor yielded up his sword
Till, being one amidst surrounding foes,
His arm could do no more.

Bas. What dost thou say? who is made pris'ner?
What king did fight so well?

Mess. The king of France.

Bas. Thou saidst — thy words do ring so in mine ears,
I cannot catch their sense — the battle's o'er?

Mess. It is, my lord. Piscaro staid your coming,
But could no longer stay. His troops were bold,
Occasion press'd him, and they bravely fought—
They bravely fought, my lord!

Bas. I hear, I hear thee.
Accurs'd am I, that it should wring my heart
To hear they bravely fought! —
They bravely fought, whilst we lay ling'ring here.
O! what a fated blow to strike me thus!
Perdition! shame! disgrace! a damned blow!

Mess. Ten thousand of the enemy are slain;
We too have lost full many a gallant soul.
I view'd the closing armies from afar;
Their close pik'd ranks in goodly order spread,
Which seem'd, alas! when that the fight was o'er,
Like the wild marshes' crop of stately reeds,
Laid with the passing storm. But woe is me!
When to the field I came, what dismal sights!
What waste of life! what heaps of bleeding slain!

Bas. Would I were laid a red, disfigur'd corse,
Amid those heaps! they fought, and we were absent!

(*Walks about distractedly, then stops short.*)

Who sent thee here?

Mess. Piscaro sent me to inform Count Basil,
He needs not now his aid, and gives him leave
To march his tardy troops to distant quarters.

Bas. He says so, does he? well, it shall be so.

(*Tossing his arms distractedly.*)

I will to quarters, narrow quarters go,
Where voice of war shall rouse me forth no more.

[EXIT.

Mess. I'll follow after him; he is distracted: —
And yet he looks so wild, I dare not do it.

Enter VICTORIA, *as if frightened, followed by* ISABELLA.

Vict. (*to* Isab.) Didst thou not mark him as he pass'd thee too?

Isab. I saw him pass, but with such hasty steps I had no time.

Vict. I met him with a wild disorder'd air,
In furious haste; he stopp'd distractedly,
And gaz'd upon me with a mournful look,
But pass'd away, and spoke not. Who art thou?
(*To the Messenger.*)
I fear thou art a bearer of bad tidings.
Mess. No, rather good, as I should deem it, madam,
Altho' unwelcome tidings to Count Basil.
Our army hath a glorious battle won;
Ten thousand French are slain, their monarch captive.
Vict. (*to Mess.*) Ah, there it is! he was not in the fight.
Run after him I pray — nay, do not so —
Run to his kinsman, good Count Rosinberg,
And bid him follow him — I pray thee run!
Mess. Nay, lady, by your leave, you seem not well:
I will conduct you hence, and then I'll go.
Vict. No, no, I'm well enough; I'm very well;
Go, hie thee hence, and do thine errand swiftly.
[Exit Messenger.
O what a wretch am I! I am to blame!
I only am to blame!
Isab. Nay, wherefore say so?
What have you done that others would not do?
Vict. What have I done? I've fool'd a noble heart —
I've wreck'd a brave man's honour!
[Exit, *leaning upon* Isabella.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *A dark night; no moon, but a few stars glimmering; the stage represents (as much as can be discovered for the darkness) a churchyard with part of a chapel, and a wing of the ducal palace adjoining to it. Enter* BASIL, *with his hat off, his hair and his dress in disorder, stepping slowly, and stopping several times to listen, as if he was afraid of meeting any one.*

Bas. No sound is here: man is at rest, and I
May near his habitations venture forth,
Like some unblessed creature of the night,
Who dares not meet his face.—Her window's dark;
No streaming light doth from her chamber beam,
That I once more may on her dwelling gaze,
And bless her still. All now is dark for me!
(*Pauses for some time, and looks upon the graves.*)
How happy are the dead, who quietly rest
Beneath these stones! each by his kindred laid,
Still in a hallow'd neighbourship with those,
Who when alive his social converse shar'd:
And now perhaps some dear surviving friend
Doth here at times the grateful visit pay,
Read with sad eyes his short memorial o'er,
And bless his mem'ry still! —
But I, like a vile outcast of my kind,
In some lone spot must lay m' unburied corse,
To rot above the earth; where, if perchance

The steps of human wand'rer e'er approach,
He'll stand aghast, and flee the horrid place,
With dark imaginations frightful made
The haunt of damned sprites. O cursed wretch!
I' the fair and honour'd field shouldst thou have died,
Where brave friends, proudly smiling thro' their tears,
Had pointed out the spot where Basil lay!
(*A light seen in* Victoria's *window.*)
But, ha! the wonted, welcome light appears.
How bright within I see her chamber wall!
Athwart it too, a dark'ning shadow moves,
A slender woman's form: it is herself!
What means that motion of its clasped hands?
That drooping head? alas! is she in sorrow?
Alas! thou sweet enchantress of the mind,
Whose voice was gladness, and whose presence bliss,
Art thou unhappy too? I've brought thee woe;
It is for me thou weep'st. Ah! were it so,
Fall'n as I am, I yet could life endure,
In some dark den from human sight conceal'd,
So, that I sometimes from my haunt might steal,
To see and love thee still. No, no, poor wretch!
She weeps thy shame, she weeps, and scorns thee too.
She moves again; e'en darkly imag'd thus,
How lovely is that form!
(*Pauses, still looking at the window.*)
To be so near thee, and for ever parted!

For ever lost! what art thou now to me?
Shall the departed gaze on thee again?
Shall I glide past thee in the midnight hour,
Whilst thou perceiv'st it not, and think'st perhaps
'Tis but the mournful breeze that passes by?
(*Pauses again, and gazes at the window, till the light disappears.*)
'Tis gone, 'tis gone! these eyes have seen their last!
The last impression of her heavenly form:
The last sight of those walls wherein she lives:
The last blest ray of light from human dwelling.
I am no more a being of this world.
Farewell! farewell! all now is dark for me!
Come fated deed! come horrour and despair!
Here lies my dreadful way.

Enter GEOFFRY, *from behind a tomb.*

Geof. O! stay, my gen'ral!
Bas. Art thou from the grave?
Geof. O my brave gen'ral! do you know me not?
I am old Geoffry, the old maimed soldier,
You did so nobly honour.
Bas. Then go thy way, for thou art honourable;
Thou hast no shame, thou need'st not seek the dark
Like fallen, fameless men. I pray thee go!
Geof. Nay, speak not thus, my noble general!
Ah! speak not thus! thou'rt brave, thou'rt honour'd still.

Thy soldier's fame is far too surely rais'd
To be o'erthrown with one unhappy chance.
I've heard of thy brave deeds with swelling heart,
And yet shall live to cast my cap in air
At glorious tales of thee. —

Bas. Forbear, forbear! thy words but wring my soul.

Geof. O! pardon me! I am old maimed Geoffry.
O! do not go! I've but one hand to hold thee.

(*Laying hold of* Basil *as he attempts to go away.* Basil *stops, and looks round upon him with softness.*)

Bas. Two would not hold so well, old honour'd vet'ran!
What wouldst thou have me do?

Geof. Return, my lord; for love of blessed heaven,
Seek not such desperate ways! where would you go?

Bas. Does Geoffry ask where should a soldier go
To hide disgrace? there is no place but one.

(*Struggling to get free.*)

Let go thy foolish hold, and force me not
To do some violence to thy hoary head —
What, wilt thou not? nay, then it must be so.

(*Breaks violently from him, and* EXIT.

Geof. Curs'd, feeble hand! he's gone to seek perdition!
I cannot run. Where is that stupid hind?

He should have met me here. Holla, Fernando!

Enter FERNANDO.

We've lost him, he is gone, he's broke from me!
Did I not bid thee meet me early here,
For that he has been known to haunt this place?

Fer. Which way has he gone?

Geof. Towards the forest, if I guess aright.
But do thou run with speed to Rosinberg,
And he will follow him: run swiftly, man!

[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

A Wood, wild and savage; an entry to a cave, very much tangled with brushwood, is seen in the back-ground. The time represents the dawn of morning. BASIL *is discovered standing near the front of the stage in a thoughtful posture, with a couple of pistols laid by him on a piece of projecting rock; he pauses for some time.*

Bas. (*alone.*) What shall I be some few short moments hence?
Why ask I now? who from the dead will rise
To tell me of that awful state unknown?
But be it what it may, or bliss, or torment,
Annihilation, dark, and endless rest,
Or some dread thing, man's wildest range of thought
Hath never yet conceiv'd, that change I'll dare
Which makes me any thing but what I am.

I can bear scorpions' stings, tread fields of fire,
In frozen gulfs of cold eternal lie,
Be toss'd aloft through tracks of endless void,
But cannot live in shame.—(*Pauses.*) O impious thought!
Will the great God of mercy, mercy have
On all but those who are most miserable?
Will he not punish with a pitying hand
The poor, fall'n, froward child? (*Pauses.*)
And shall I then against his will offend,
Because he is most good and merciful?
O! horrid baseness! what, what shall I do?
I'll think no more — it turns my dizzy brain —
It is too late to think — what must be, must be —
I cannot live, therefore I needs must die.

(*Takes up the pistols, and walks up and down, looking wildly around him, then discovering the cave's mouth.*)

Here is an entry to some darksome cave,
Where an uncoffin'd corse may rest in peace,
And hide its foul corruption from the earth.
The threshold is unmark'd by mortal foot.
I'll do it here.

(*Enters the cave and* EXIT; *a deep silence; then the report of a pistol is heard from the cave, and soon after, enter* Rosinberg, Valtomer, *two* Officers *and* Soldiers, *almost at the same moment, by different sides of the stage.*)

Ros. This way the sound did come.

Valt. How came ye, soldiers? heard ye that report?

1*st Sol.* We heard it, and it seem'd to come
from hence,
Which made us this way hie.
Ros. A horrid fancy darts across my mind.
(*A groan heard from the cave.*)
(*To* Valt.) Ha! heard'st thou that?
Valt. Methinks it is the groan of one in pain.
(*A second groan.*)
Ros. Ha! there again!
Valt. From this cave's mouth, so dark and
choak'd with weeds,
It seems to come.
Ros. I'll enter first.
1*st Off.* My Lord, the way is tangled o'er with
briers:
Hard by, a few short paces to the left,
There is another mouth of easier access;
I pass'd it even now.
Ros. Then shew the way. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.

The inside of the cave. BASIL *discovered lying on the ground, with his head raised a little upon a few stones and earth, the pistols lying beside him, and blood upon his breast. Enter* ROSINBERG, VALTOMER, *and* OFFICERS. Rosinberg, *upon seeing* Basil, *stops short with horrour, and remains motionless for some time.*

Valt. Great God of heaven! what a sight is this!
(Rosinberg *runs to* Basil, *and stoops down by his side.*)

Ros. O Basil! O my friend! what hast thou done?

Bas. (*covering his face with his hand.*) Why art thou come? I thought to die in peace.

Ros. Thou know'st me not — I am thy Rosinberg,
Thy dearest, truest friend, thy loving kinsman!
Thou dost not say to me, Why art thou come?

Bas. Shame knows no kindred: I am fall'n, disgrac'd;
My fame is gone, I cannot look upon thee.

Ros. My Basil, noble spirit! talk not thus!
The greatest mind untoward fate may prove:
Thou art our gen'rous, valiant leader still,
Fall'n as thou art — and yet thou art not fall'n;
Who says thou art, must put his harness on,
And prove his words in blood.

Bas. Ah, Rosinberg! this is no time to boast!
I once had hopes a glorious name to gain;
Too proud of heart, I did too much aspire;
The hour of trial came, and found me wanting.
Talk not of me, but let me be forgotten.—
And O! my friend! something upbraids me here,
(*Laying his hand on his breast.*)
For that I now remember how oft-times
I have usurp'd it o'er thy better worth,
Most vainly teaching where I should have learnt;
But thou wilt pardon me. —

Ros. (*taking* Basil's *hand, and pressing it to his breast.*) Rend not my heart in twain!
O! talk not thus!

I knew thou wert superiour to myself,
And to all men beside: thou wert my pride;
I paid thee def'rence with a willing heart.
Bas. It was delusion, all delusion, Rosinberg!
I feel my weakness now, I own my pride.
Give me thy hand, my time is near the close:
Do this for me: thou know'st my love, Victoria—
Ros. O curse that woman! she it is alone —
She has undone us all!
Bas. It doubles unto me the stroke of death
To hear thee name her thus. O curse her not!
The fault is mine; she's gentle, good and blameless —
Thou wilt not then my dying wish fulfil?
Ros. I will! I will! what wouldst thou have me do?
Bas. See her when I am gone; be gentle with her;
And tell her that I bless'd her in my death;
E'en in my agonies I lov'd and bless'd her.
Wilt thou do this? —
Ros. I'll do what thou desir'st.
Bas. I thank thee, Rosinberg; my time draws near.
(*Raising his head a little, and perceiving* Officers.)
Is there not some one here? are we alone?
Ros. (*making a sign for the* Officers *to retire.*)
'Tis but a sentry, to prevent intrusion.
Bas. Thou know'st this desp'rate deed from sacred rites
Hath shut me out: I am unbless'd of men,

And what I am in sight of th' awful God,
I dare not think; when I am gone, my friend,
O! let a good man's prayers to heav'n ascend
For an offending spirit! — Pray for me.
What thinkest thou? although an outcast here,
May not some heavenly mercy still be found?

Ros. Thou wilt find mercy — my beloved Basil —
It cannot be that thou shouldst be rejected.
I will with bended knee — I will implore —
It choaks mine utterance — I will pray for thee —

Bas. This comforts me—thou art a loving friend.
(*A noise without.*)

Ros. (*to* Off. *without.*) What noise is that?

Enter VALTOMER.

Valt. (*to* Ros.) My lord, the soldiers all insist to enter.
What shall I do? they will not be denied:
They say that they will see their noble gen'ral.

Bas. Ah, my brave fellows! do they call me so?

Ros. Then let them come.

(*Enter* Soldiers, *who gather round* BASIL, *and look mournfully upon him; he holds out his hand to them with a faint smile.*)

Bas. My gen'rous soldiers, this is kindly meant.
I'm low i' the dust; God bless you all, brave hearts!

1*st Sol.* And God bless you, my noble, noble gen'ral!
We'll never follow such a leader more.

2d Sol. Ah! had you staid with us, my noble gen'ral,
We would have died for you.

(*3d Soldier endeavours next to speak, but cannot; and kneeling down by* Basil, *covers his face with his cloak.* Rosinberg *turns his face to the wall and weeps.*)

Bas. (*in a very faint broken voice.*) Where art thou? do not leave me, Rosinberg —
Come near to me — these fellows make me weep:
I have no power to weep — give me thy hand —
I love to feel thy grasp — my heart beats strangely —
It beats as tho' its breathings would be few —
Remember —

Ros. Is there aught thou wouldst desire?

Bas. Nought but a little earth to cover me,
And lay the smooth sod even with the ground —
Let no stone mark the spot — give no offence.
I fain would say — what can I say to thee?

(*A deep pause; after a feeble struggle,* Basil *expires.*)

1*st Sol.* That motion was his last.

2d Sol. His spirit's fled.

1*st Sol.* God grant it peace! it was a noble spirit!

4*th Sol.* The trumpet's sound did never rouse a braver.

1*st Sol.* Alas! no trumpet e'er shall rouse him more,
Until the dreadful blast that wakes the dead.

2d Sol. And when that sounds it will not wake a braver.

3d Sol. How pleasantly he shar'd our hardest toil!
Our coarsest food the daintiest fare he made.

4th Sol. Ay, many a time i' the cold damp plain has he
With cheerful count'nance cried, "Good rest, my hearts!"
Then wrapp'd him in his cloak, and laid him down
E'en like the meanest soldier in the field.

(Rosinberg *all this time continues hanging over the body, and gazing upon it.* Valtomer *now endeavours to draw him away.*)

Valt. This is too sad, my lord.

Ros. There, seest thou how he lies? so fix'd, so pale?
Ah! what an end is this! thus lost! thus fall'n!
To be thus taken in his middle course,
Where he so nobly strove; till cursed passion
Came like a sun-stroke on his mid-day toil,
And cut the strong man down. O Basil! Basil!

Valt. Forbear, my friend, we must not sorrow here.

Ros. He was the younger brother of my soul.

Valt. Indeed, my lord, it is too sad a sight.
Time calls us, let the body be remov'd.

Ros. He was—O! he was like no other man!

Valt. (*still endeavouring to draw him away.*) Nay, now forbear.

Ros. I lov'd him from his birth!

Valt. Time presses, let the body be remov'd.
Ros. What say'st thou?
Valt. Shall we not remove him hence?
Ros. He has forbid it, and has charg'd me well
To leave his grave unknown? for that the church
All sacred rites to the self-slain denies.
He would not give offence.
1*st Sol.* What! shall our gen'ral, like a very wretch,
Be laid unhonour'd in the common ground?
No last salute to bid his soul farewell?
No warlike honours paid? it shall not be.
2*d Sol.* Laid thus? no, by the blessed light of heav'n!
In the most holy spot in Mantua's walls
He shall be laid; in face of day be laid:
And tho' black priests should curse us in the teeth,
We will fire o'er him whilst our hands have power
To grasp a musket.
Several Soldiers. Let those who dare forbid it!
Ros. My brave companions, be it as you will.
(*Spreading out his arms as if he would embrace the Soldiers.* — *They prepare to remove the body.*)
Valt. Nay, stop a while, we will not move it now,
For see a mournful visitor appears,
And must not be denied.

Enter VICTORIA *and* ISABELLA.

Vict. I thought to find him here, where has he fled?

(Rosinberg *points to the body without speaking ;* Victoria *shrieks out and falls into the arms of* Isabella.)

Isab. Alas! my gentle mistress, this will kill thee.

Vict. (*recovering.*) Unloose thy hold, and let me look upon him.

O! horrid, horrid sight! my ruin'd Basil!
Is this the sad reward of all thy love?
O! I have murder'd thee!
(*Kneels down by the body, and bends over it.*)
These wasted streams of life! this bloody wound!
(*Laying her hand upon his heart.*)
Is there no breathing here? all still! all cold!
Open thine eyes, speak, be thyself again,
And I will love thee, serve thee, follow thee,
In spite of all reproach. Alas! alas!
A lifeless corse art thou for ever laid,
And dost not hear my call. —

Ros. No, madam; now your pity comes too late.

Vict. Dost thou upbraid me? O! I have deserv'd it!

Ros. No, madam, no, I will not now upbraid:
But woman's grief is like a summer storm,
Short as it violent is; in gayer scenes,
Where soon thou shalt in giddy circles blaze,
And play the airy goddess of the day,
Thine eye, perchance, amidst th' observing crowd,
Shall mark th' indignant face of Basil's friend,
And then it will upbraid.

Vict. No, never, never! thus it shall not be.

To the dark, shaded cloister wilt thou go,
Where sad and lonely, thro' the dismal grate
Thou'lt spy my wasted form, and then upbraid me.

Ros. Forgive me, heed me not; I'm griev'd at heart;
I'm fretted, gall'd, all things are hateful to me.
If thou didst love my friend, I will forgive thee;
I must forgive thee: with his dying breath
He bade me tell thee, that his latest thoughts
Were love to thee; in death he lov'd and bless'd thee.

(Victoria *goes to throw herself upon the body, but is prevented by* Valtomer *and* Isabella, *who support her in their arms, and endeavour to draw her away from it.*)

Vict. Oh! force me not away! by his cold corse
Let me lie down and weep. O! Basil, Basil!
The gallant and the brave! how hast thou lov'd me!
If there is any holy kindness in you,
(*To* Isab. *and* Valt.)
Tear me not hence.
For he lov'd me in thoughtless folly lost,
With all my faults, most worthless of his love;
And him I'll love in the low bed of death,
In horrour and decay. —
Near his lone tomb I'll spend my wretched days
In humble pray'r for his departed spirit:
Cold as his grave shall be my earthy bed,
As dark my cheerless cell. Force me not hence.

I will not go, for grief hath made me strong.
(*Struggling to get loose.*)
Ros. Do not withhold her, leave her sorrow free.
(*They let her go, and she throws herself upon the body in an agony of grief.*)
It doth subdue the sternness of my grief
To see her mourn him thus.—Yet I must curse.—
Heav'n's curses light upon her damned father,
Whose crooked policy has wrought this wreck!
Isab. If he has done it, you are well reveng'd,
For all his hidden plots detected are.
Gauriceio, for some int'rest of his own,
His master's secret dealings with the foe
Has to Lanoy betray'd; who straight hath sent,
On the behalf of his imperial lord,
A message full of dreadful threats to Mantua.
His discontented subjects aid him not;
He must submit to the degrading terms
A haughty conqu'ring power will now impose.
Ros. And art thou sure of this?
Isab. I am, my lord.
Ros. Give me thy hand, I'm glad on't, O! I'm glad on't!
It should be so! how like a hateful ape
Detected, grinning, 'midst his pilfer'd hoard,
A cunning man appears, whose secret frauds
Are open'd to the day! scorn'd, hooted, mock'd!
Scorn'd by the very fools who most admir'd
His worthless art. But when a great mind falls,
The noble nature of man's gen'rous heart
Doth bear him up against the shame of ruin;

With gentle censure using but his faults
As modest means to introduce his praise;
For pity like a dewy twilight comes
To close th' oppressive splendour of his day,
And they who but admir'd him in his height,
His alter'd state lament, and love him fall'n.

[EXEUNT.

END OF BASIL.

THE TRYAL:

A COMEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

Mr. Withrington.
Mr. Harwood.
Colonel Hardy.
Sir Loftus Prettyman.
Mr. Opal.
Mr. Royston.
Humphry.
Jonathan.
Thomas.
Servants, &c.

WOMEN:

Agnes,
Mariane, } *Nieces to* Withrington.
Miss Eston.
Mrs. Betty, *Maid to* Agnes.

*** *Scene in* Bath, *and in* Mr. Withrington's *house in the environs of* Bath.

THE TRYAL.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — MR. WITHRINGTON's *house : Enter* WITHRINGTON *and his two Nieces hanging upon his arms, coaxing him in a playful manner as they advance towards the front of the Stage.*

With. Poo, poo, get along, young gipsies, and don't tease me any more.

Ag. So we will, my good Sir, when you have granted our suit.

Mar. Do, dear uncle, it will be so pleasant!

With. Get along, get along. Don't think to wheedle me into it. It would be very pleasant, truly, to see an old fellow, with a wig upon his bald pate, making one in a holiday mummery with a couple of madcaps.

Ag. Nay, don't lay the fault upon the wig, good Sir, for it is as youthful, and as sly, and as saucy looking as the best head of hair in the county. As for your old wig, indeed, there was so much curmudgeon-like austerity about it, that young people fled from before it, as, I dare say, the birds do at present; for I am sure it is stuck up in some cherry-orchard, by this time, to frighten away the sparrows.

With. You are mistaken, young mistress, it is up stairs in my wig-box.

Ag. Well, I am glad it is anywhere but upon your pate, uncle. (*Turning his face towards* Mariane.) Look at him, pray! is he not ten years younger since he wore it? Is there one bit of an old grumbler to be seen about him now?

Mar. He is no more like the man he was, than I am like my godmother. (*Clapping his shoulder.*) You must even do as we have bid you, Sir, for this excuse will never bring you off.

With. Poo, poo, it is a foolish girl's whimsey: I'll have nothing to do with it.

Ag. It is a reasonable woman's desire, gentle guardian, and you must consent to it. For if I am to marry at all, I am resolved to have a respectable man, and a man who is attached to me; and to find out such a one, in my present situation, is impossible. I am provoked beyond all patience with your old greedy lords, and match-making aunts, introducing their poor noodle heirs-apparent to me. Your ambitious esquires, and proud obsequious baronets, are intolerable; and your rakish younger brothers are nauseous: such creatures only surround me, whilst men of sense stand at a distance, and think me as foolish as the company I keep. One would swear I was made of amber, to attract all the dust and chaff of the community.

With. There is some truth in this, 'faith.

Ag. You see how it is with me: so, my dear,

loving, good uncle, (*Coaxing him.*) do let Mariane take my place for a little while. We are newly come to Bath; nobody knows us: we have been but at one ball, and as Mariane looks so much better than me, she has already been mistaken for the heiress, and I for her portionless cousin: I have told you how we shall manage it; do lend us your assistance!

With. So in the disguise of a portionless spinster, you are to captivate some man of sense, I suppose?

Ag. I would fain have it so.

With. Go, go, thou art a fool, Agnes! who will fall in love with a little ordinary girl like thee? why, there is not one feature in thy face that a man would give a farthing for.

Mar. You are very saucy, uncle.

Ag. I should despair of my beauty to be sure, since I am reckoned so much like you, my dear Sir; yet old nurse told me that a rich lady, a great lady, and the prettiest lady that ever wore silk, fell in love, once on a time, with Mr. Anthony, and would have followed him to the world's end too, if it had not been for an old hunks of a father, who deserved to be drubbed for his pains. Don't you think he did, Sir?

With. (*endeavouring to look angry.*) Old nurse is a fool, and you are an impudent hussy. I'll hear no more of this nonsense. (*Breaks from them, and goes towards the door: they run after him, and draw him back again.*)

Ag. Nay, good Sir, we have not quite done with you yet: grant our request, and then scamper off as you please.

Mar. I'll hold both your arms till you grant it.

With. (*to* Mar.) And what makes you so eager about it, young lady? you expect, I suppose, to get a husband by the trick. O fy, fy! the poorest girl in England would blush at such a thought, who calls herself an honest one.

Ag. And Mariane would reject the richest man in England who could harbour such a suspicion. But give yourself no uneasiness about this, Sir; she need not go a husband-hunting, for she is already engaged.—(Mariane *looks frightened, and makes signs to* Agnes *over her uncle's shoulder, which she answers with a smile of encouragement.*)

With. Engaged! she is very good, truly, to manage all this matter herself, being afraid to give me any trouble, I suppose. And pray what fool has she picked out from the herd, to enter into this precious engagement with?

Ag. A foolish fellow enough to be sure, your favourite nephew, cousin Edward.

With. Hang the silly booby! how could he be such an idiot! but it can't be, it shan't be!—it is folly to put myself into a passion about it. (*To* Mariane, *who puts her hand on his shoulder to soothe him.*) Hold off your hands, Ma'am! This is news indeed to amuse me with of a morning.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and I can tell you more news; for they are not only engaged, but as

soon as he returns from abroad they are to be married.

With. Well, well, let them marry in the devil's name, and go a-begging if they please.

Ag. No, gentle guardian, they need not go a-begging; they will have a good fortune to support them.

With. Yes, yes, they will get a prize in the lottery, or find out the philosopher's stone, and coin their old shoes into guineas.

Ag. No, Sir, it is not that way the fortune is to come.

With. No; he has been following some knight-errant, then, I suppose, and will have an island in the South Sea for his pains.

Ag. No, you have not guessed it yet. (*Stroking his hand gently.*) Did you never hear of a good, kind, rich uncle of theirs, the generous Mr. Withrington? he is to settle a handsome provision upon them as soon as they are married, and leave them his fortune at last.

With. (*lifting up his hands.*) Well, I must say thou art the sauciest little jade in the kingdom! But did you never hear that this worthy uncle of theirs, having got a new wig, which makes him ten years younger than he was, is resolved to embrace the opportunity, and seek out a wife for himself?

Ag. O! that is nothing to the purpose; for what I have said about the fortune must happen, though he should, seek out a score of wives for himself.

With. Must happen! but I say it shall not happen. Whether should you or I know best?

Ag. Why me, to be sure.

With. Ha, ha, ha! how so, baggage?

Ag. (*resting her arm on his shoulder, looking archly in his face.*) You don't know, perhaps, that when I went to Scotland last summer, I travelled far, and far, as the tale says, and farther than I can tell, till I came to the Isle of Sky, where every body has the second sight, and has nothing to do but tear a little hole in a tartan-plaidy, and peering through it, in this manner, sees every thing past, present, and to come. Now, you must know, I gave an old woman half-a-crown and a roll of tobacco for a peep or two through her plaid; and what do you think I saw, uncle?

With. The devil dancing a hornpipe, I suppose.

Ag. There was somebody dancing to be sure, but it was not the devil, though. Who do you think it was now?

With. Poo, poo!

Ag. It was uncle himself, at Mariane's wedding, leading down the first dance with the bride. I saw a sheet of parchment in a corner, too, signed with his own blessed hand, and a very handsome settlement it was. So he led down the first dance himself, and we all followed after him, as merry as so many hay-makers.

With. Thou hast had a sharp sight, 'faith!

Ag. And I took a second peep through the plaidy, and what do you think I saw then, Sir?

With. Nay, prate on as thou wilt.

Ag. A genteel family-house, where Edward and Mariane dwelt, and several little brats running up and down in it. Some of them so tall, and so tall, and some of them no taller than this. And there came good uncle amongst them, and they all flocked about him so merrily; every body was so glad to see him, the very scullions from the kitchen were glad; and methought he looked as well pleased himself as any of them. Don't you think he did, Sir?

With. Have done with thy prating.

Ag. I have not done yet, good Sir; for I took another peep still, and then I saw a most dismal changed family indeed. There was a melancholy sick bed set out, in the best chamber; every face was sad, and all the children were weeping. There was one dark-eyed rogue amongst them, called little Anthony, and he threw away his bread and butter, and roared like a young bull, for woe's me! old uncle was dying. (*Observing* Withrington *affected.*) But old uncle recovered though, and looked as stout as a veteran again. So I gave the old woman her plaidy, and would not look through any more.

With. Thou art the wildest little witch in the world, and wilt never be at rest till thou hast got every thing thine own way, I believe.

Ag. I thank you, I thank you, dear uncle! (*leaping round his neck,*) it shall be even so, and I shall have my own little boon into the bargain.

With. I did not say so.

Ag. But I know it will be so, and many thanks to you, my dear good uncle! (Mariane *ventures to come from behind,* — Withrington *looks gently to her, she holds out her hand, he hesitates, and* Agnes *joins their hands together, giving them a hearty shake.*)

With. Come, come, let me get away from you now: you are a couple of insinuating gipsies.

[EXIT, *hastily.*

Mar. (*embracing* Agnes.) Well, heaven bless thee, my sweet Agnes! thou hast done marvels for me. You gave me a fright though; I thought we were ruined.

Ag. O! I knew I should get the better of him some way or other. What a good, worthy heart he has! you don't know how dearly I love this old uncle of ours.

Mar. I wonder how it is. I used to think him severe and unreasonable, with his fiddle faddle fancies about delicacy and decorum; but since you came amongst us, Agnes, you have so coaxed him, and laughed at him, and played with him, that he has become almost as frolicksome as ourselves.

Ag. Let us set about our project immediately. Nobody knows us here but lady Fade and Miss Eston: we must let them both into the secret: Lady Fade is confined with bad health, and though Miss Eston, I believe, would rather tell a secret than hold her tongue, yet as long as there are streets and carriages, and balls and ribbons, and

feathers and fashions, to talk of, there can be no great danger from her.

Mar. O! we shall do very well. How I long to frolick it away, in all the rich trappings of heirship, amongst those sneaking wretches, the fortune-hunters! They have neglected me as a poor girl, but I will play the deuce amongst them as a rich one.

Ag. You will acquit yourself very handsomely, I dare say, and find no lack of admirers.

Mar. I have two or three in my eye just now, but of all men living I have set my heart upon humbling Sir Loftus. He insulted a friend of mine last winter, to ingratiate himself with an envious woman of quality, but I will be revenged upon him; O! how I will scorn him, and toss up my nose at him.

Ag. That is not the way to be revenged upon him, silly girl! He is haughty and reserved in his manners; and though not altogether without understanding, has never suffered a higher idea to get footing in his noddle than that of appearing a man of consequence and fashion; and though he has no happiness but in being admired as a fine gentleman, and no existence but at an assembly, he appears there with all the haughty gravity, and careless indifference of a person superior to such paltry amusements. Such a man as this must be laughed at, not scorned; contempt must be his portion.

Mar. He shall have it then. And as for his

admirer and imitator, Jack Opal, who has for these ten years past so successfully performed every kind of fine gentlemanship, that every new fool brought into fashion, any kind of bad treatment, I suppose, that happens to come into my head will be good enough for him.

Ag. Quite good enough. You have set him down for one of your admirers too?

Mar. Yes, truly, and a great many more besides.

Ag. Did you observe in the ball-room last night, a genteel young man, with dark grey eyes, and a sensible countenance, but with so little of the foppery of the fashion about him, that one took him at a distance for a much older man?

Mar. Wore he not a plain brownish coat? and stood he not very near us great part of the evening?

Ag. Yes, the very same. Pray endeavour to attract him, Mariane.

Mar. If you are very desirous to see him in my train, I will.

Ag. No, not desirous, neither.

Mar. Then wherefore should I try?

Ag. Because I would have you try every art to win him, and I would not have him to be won.

Mar. O! I comprehend it now! this is the sensible man we are in quest of.

Ag. I shall not be sorry if it proves so. I have inquired who he is, as I shall tell you by and by, and what I have learnt of him I like. Is not his appearance prepossessing?

Mar. I don't know, he is too grave and dignified for such a girl as thou art; I fear we shall waste our labour upon him.

Ag. But he does not look always so. He kept very near me, if it did not look vain, I should say followed me all the evening, and many a varied expression his countenance assumed. But when I went away arm in arm with my uncle, in our usual good-humoured way, I shall never forget the look of pleasant approbation with which he followed me. I had learnt but a little while before the mistake which the company made in regard to us, and at that moment the idea of this project came across my mind like a flash of lightning.

Mar. Very well, gentle cousin; the task you assign me is pleasing to my humour, and the idea of promoting your happiness at the same time will make it delightful. Let me see, how many lovers shall I have — one, two, three. (*Counting on her fingers.*)

Ag. I can tell you of one lover more than you wot of.

Mar. Pray who is he?

Ag. Our distant cousin, the great 'squire, and man of business, from ——shire: he writes to my uncle that he will be in Bath to-day, upon business of the greatest importance, which he explains to him in three pages of close-written paper; but whether he is to court me for himself, or for his son, or to solicit a great man,

who is here, for a place, no mortal on earth can discover.

Mar. Well, let him come, I shall manage them all. O! if my Edward were here just now, how he would laugh at us!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Miss Eston.

Mar. Let us run out of her way, and say we are not at home. She will sit and talk these two hours.

Ag. But you forgot, we have something to say to her. (*To the* Servant.) Shew her up stairs to my dressing-room. [EXIT Servant.

Mar. Pray let us run up stairs before her, or she will arrest us here with her chat.

[EXEUNT.

Miss Eston. (*without.*) And it is a very bad thing for all that; I never could abide it. I wonder your master don't stop (*Enters, walking straight across the stage, still speaking.*) up those nasty chinks; there is such a wind in the hall, 'tis enough to give one a hoarseness. By-the-bye, Mrs. Mumblecake is sadly to-day; has your lady sent to inquire for her, William? I wonder if her (EXIT, *still talking without.*) old coachman has left her? I saw a new face on the, &c. &c.

SCENE II.

The fields before MR. WITHRINGTON'S *house. Enter* AGNES, MARIANE, *and* MISS ESTON, *who seem still busy talking, from the house, and passing over the Stage, arm in arm,* Exeunt. *Enter by the same side by which they went out,* SIR LOFTUS PRETTYMAN, *and* HARWOOD, *who stands looking behind him, as if he followed something with his eyes very eagerly.*

Sir Loft. (*advancing to the front of the stage, and speaking to himself.*) How cursedly unlucky this is now! if she had come out but a few moments sooner, I should have passed her walking arm in arm with a British peer. How provokingly these things always happen with me! (*Observing* Harwood.) What! is he staring after her too? (*Aloud.*) What are you looking at, Harwood? does she walk well?

Har. I can't tell how she walks, but I could stand and gaze after her till the sun went down upon me.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, I grant you.

Har. (*vastly pleased.*) I knew she would please, it is impossible she should not! There is something so delightful in the play of her countenance, it would even make a plain woman beautiful.

Sir Loft. She is a fine woman, and that is no

despicable praise from one who is accustomed to the elegance of fashionable beauty.

Har. I would not compare her to any thing so trifling and insipid.

Sir Loft. She has one advantage which fashionable beauty seldom possesses.

Har. What do you mean?

Sir Loft. A large fortune.

Har. (*looking disappointed.*) It is not the heiress I mean.

Sir Loft. Is it t'other girl you are raving about? She is showy at a distance, I admit, but as awkward as a dairy-maid when near you; and her tongue goes as fast as if she were repeating a paternoster.

Har. What, do you think I am silly enough to be caught with that magpie?

Sir Loft. Who is it then, Harwood? I see nobody with Miss Withrington but Miss Eston, and the poor little creature her cousin.

Har. Good God! what a contemptible perversion of taste do interest and fashion create! But it is all affectation. (*Looking contemptuously at him.*)

Sir Loft. (*smiling contemptuously in return.*) Ha, ha, ha! I see how it is with you, Harwood, and I beg pardon too. The lady is very charming, I dare say; upon honour I never once looked in her face. She is a dependent relation of Miss Withrington's, I believe: now I never take notice of such girls, for if you do it once, they expect you to do it again. I am sparing of my attentions,

that she on whom I really bestow them may have the more reason to boast.

Har. You are right, Prettyman: she who boasts of your attentions should receive them all herself, that nobody else may know their real worth.

Sir Loft. You are severe this morning, Mr. Harwood, but you do not altogether comprehend me, I believe. I know perhaps more of the world than a studious Templar can be supposed to do; and I assure you, men of fashion, upon this principle, are sparing of their words too, that they may be listened to more attentively when they do speak.

Har. You are very right still, Sir Loftus; for if they spoke much, I'll be hang'd if they would get any body to listen to them at all.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily.*) There is another reason why men of fashion are not profuse of their words: inferiour people are apt to forget themselves, and despise what is too familiar.

Har. Don't take so much pains to make me comprehend that the more fools speak the more people will despise them; I never had a clearer conviction of it in my life.

Sir Loft. (*haughtily.*) Good morning, Sir: I see Lord Saunter in the other walk, and I must own I prefer the company of one who knows, at least the common rules of politeness. [EXIT.

Har. (*alone.*) What a contemptible creature it is! He would prefer the most affected idiot, who boasts a little fashion or consequence, as he calls

it, to the most beautiful native character in the world. Here comes another fool, who has been gazing too, but I will not once mention her before him.

Enter OPAL.

Op. Good morning, Harwood: I have been fortunate just now; I have met some fine girls, 'faith!

Har. I am glad you have met with any thing so agreeable: they are all equally charming to you, I suppose.

Op. Nay, Harwood, I know how to distinguish. There is a little animated creature amongst them, all life and spirit: on my soul I could almost be in love with her.

Har. Ha! thou hast more discernment than I reckoned upon. If that goose, Sir Loftus, did not spoil thee, Jack, thou wouldst be a very good fellow after all. Why, I must tell you, my good Opal, that lady whom you admire is the sweetest little gipsey in England.

Op. Is she indeed? I wish I had taken a better look of her face then; but she wears such a cursed plume of blue feathers nodding over her nose, there is scarcely one half of it to be seen.

Har. (*staring at him with astonishment.*) As I breathe! he has fallen in love with the magpie!

Op. And what is so surprising in this, pray? Does not all the world allow Miss Withrington the heiress to be a fine woman?

Har. That is not the heiress, Jack, (*pointing off the stage.*) the tall lady in the middle is her. But if your Dulcinea could coin her words into farthings, she would be one of the best matches in the kingdom.

Op. Pest take it! she was pointed out to me as Miss Withrington. Pest take my stupidity! the girl is well enough, but she is not altogether—

(*Mumbling to himself.*)

Har. So you bestowed all your attention on this blue-feather'd lady, and let the other two pass by unnoticed.

Op. No, not unnoticed neither: Miss Withrington is too fine a figure to be overlooked any where; and for the other poor little creature, who hung upon her arm so familiarly, I could not help observing her too, because I wondered Miss Withrington allowed such a dowdy-looking thing to walk with her in public. Faith! I sent a vulgar-looking devil out of the way on a fool's errand the other morning, who insisted upon going with Prettyman and I, to the pump-room: men of fashion, you know, are always plagued with paltry fellows dangling after them.

Har. Hang your men of fashion! mere paltry fellows are too good company for them.

Op. Damn it, Harwood! speak more respectfully of that class of men to whom I have the honour to belong.

Har. You mistake me, Opal, it was only the men of fashion I abused; I am too well bred to

speak uncivilly, in our presence, of the other class you mentioned.

Op. I scorn your insinuation, Sir; but whatever class of men I belong to, I praise heaven I have nothing of the sour plodding book-worm about me.

Har. You do well to praise heaven for the endowments it has bestowed upon you, Opal; if all men were as thankful as you for this blessed gift of ignorance, we could not be said to live in an ungrateful generation.

Op. Talk away, laugh at your own wit as much as you please, I don't mind it. I don't trouble my head to find out bons mots of a morning.

Har. You are very right, Jack, for it would be to no purpose if you did.

Op. I speak whatever comes readiest to me; I don't study speeches for company, Harwood.

Har. I hope so, Opal; you would have a laborious life of it, indeed, if you could not speak nonsense extempore.

Op. (*drawing himself up, and walking haughtily to the other side of the stage.*) I had no business to be so familiar with him. Sir Loftus is right; a reserved manner keeps impertinent people at a distance, (*aside — Turns about, makes a very stiff bow to* Harwood, *and* Exit.)

Har. (*alone.*) I am glad he is gone. What do I see? (*here* Mariane, Agnes, *and* Miss Eston *walk over the bottom of the stage attended by* Sir Loftus *and* Opal, *and* Exeunt *by the opposite side.* Har. *looking after them.*) Alas, now! that such impudent

fellows should be so successful, whilst I stand gazing at a distance! How lightly she trips! does she not look about to me? by heaven I'll run to her! (*Runs to the bottom of the stage, and stops short.*) Oh no! I cannot do it! but see, her uncle comes this way. He look'd so kindly at her, I could not help loving him; he must be a good man; I'll make up to him, and he perhaps will join the ladies afterwards. [EXIT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Lodging-house. Enter* ROYSTON *and* HUMPHRY, *followed by* JONATHAN, *carrying a portmanteau.*

Roy. What a world of business I have got upon my hands! I must set about it immediately. Come here, Jonathan; I shall send you out in the first place.

Jon. Well, Sir.

Roy. Take the black trunk, that is left in the hall, upon your shoulder, Jonathan, and be sure you don't run against any body with it, for that might bring us into trouble. And perhaps as you go along, you may chance to meet with some of the Duke of Begall's servants, or with somebody who can tell you where his Grace lodges in this town, and you may enquire of them, without saying I desired you; you understand me, Jonathan?

Jon. O yes, your honour!

Roy. But first of all, however, if you see any decent hair-dresser's shop in your way, desire them to send somebody here for my wig; and like enough they may tell you, at the same time, where there is an honest Town-crier to be had; I'll have Phœbe's black whelp cried directly: and hark ye, Jonathan, you may say as though the dog were your own, you understand, they will expect such a devil of a reward else; and pri'thee, man! step into the corn-market, if thou canst find out the way, and enquire the price of oats.

Jon. Yes, please your honour, but am I to go trudging about to all these places with that great heavy trunk upon my shoulder?

Roy. No, numskull! did I not bid you carry it to the Inn where the London stage puts up? by the bye, you had better take it to the waggon—but first ask the coachman, what he charges for the carriage: you can take it to the waggon afterwards. I will suffer no man to impose upon me. You will remember all this distinctly now, as I have told it you, Jonathan?

Jon. (*counting to himself upon his fingers*). O yes, your honour! I'll manage it all, I warrant!

[EXIT.

Roy. What a world of business I have upon my hands, Humphry; I am as busy as a minister of state.

Re-enter JONATHAN, *scratching his head.*

Jon. La your honour! I have forgot all about his Grace, and the black whelp.

Roy. Damn your muddle pate! did not I bid

you enquire where his grace lives, and if you happen to see—

Jon. Ods bodickins! I remember it every word now! and the whelp is to be called by the Town-crier, just as one would call any thing that is lost.

Roy. Yes, yes, go about it speedily. (*Exit* JON.) Now in the first place, my good Humphry, I must see after the heiress I told you of; and it is a business which requires a great deal of management too; for—

Re-enter JONATHAN, *scratching his head.* Damn that dunder-headed fool! here he is again.

Jon. Your honour won't be angry now, but hang me, if I can tell whether I am to take that there trunk to the coach, or the waggon.

Roy. Take it to the coach—no, no, to the waggon—yes, yes, I should have said—pest take it! carry it where thou wilt, fool, and plague me no more about it. (*Exit* JON.) One might as well give directions to a horse-block. Now, as I was saying, Humphry, this requires a great deal of management; for if the lady don't like me, she may happen to like my son: so I must feel my way a little, before I speak directly to the purpose.

Humph. Ay, your honour is always feeling your way.

Roy. And as for the Duke, I will ply him as close as I can with solicitations in the mean time, without altogether stating my request: for

if I get the lady, George shall have the office, and if he gets the lady, I shall have the office. So we shall have two chances in our favour both ways, my good Humphry.

Humph. Belike, Sir, if we were to take but one business in hand at a time, we might come better off at the long run.

Roy. O! thou hast no head for business, Humphry: thou hast no genius for business, my good Humphry. (*smiling conceitedly.*)

Humph. Why, for certain, your honour has a marvellous deal of wit; but I don't know how it is, nothing that we take in hand ever comes to any good; and what provokes me more than all the rest, is, that the more pains we take about it, the worse it always succeeds.

Roy. Humph! we can't guard against every cross accident.

Humph. To be sure, Sir, cross accidents will happen to every body, but certes! we have more than our own share of them.

Roy. Well, don't trouble yourself about it: I have head enough to manage my own affairs, and more than my own too. Why, my lord Slumber can't even grant a new lease, nor imprison a vagabond for poaching, without my advice and direction: did I not manage all Mr. Harebrain's election for him? and, but for one of these cursed accidents or two, had brought him in for his Borough, as neatly as my glove. Nay, if his Grace and I get into good understanding together, there is no

knowing, but I may have affairs of the nation upon my hands. Ha, ha, ha! poor Humphry, thou hast no comprehension of all this: thou think'st me a very wonderful man, dost thou not?

Humph. I must own I do sometimes marvel at your honour.

Enter Mr. WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Ha! how do you do, my dear cousin? I hope I have the happiness of seeing you in good health: I am heartily rejoiced to see you, my very good Sir. (*Shaking him heartily by the hand.*)

With. I thank you, Sir, you are welcome to Bath; I did not expect the pleasure of seeing you here.

Roy. Why, my dear worthy Sir, I am a man of so much business, so toss'd about, so harass'd with a multiplicity of affairs, that, I protest, I can't tell myself one day what part of the world I shall be in the next.

With. You give yourself a great deal of trouble, Mr. Royston.

Roy. O! hang it! I never spare myself: I must work to make others work, cousin Withrington. I have got a world of new alterations going on at Royston-hall; if you would take a trip down to see them —

With. I am no great traveller, Sir.

Roy. I have plough'd up the bowling-green, and cut down the elm trees; I have built new

stables, and fill'd up the horse-pond; I have dug up the orchard, and pull'd down the old fruit-wall, where that odd little temple used to stand.

With. And is the little temple pulled down too? pray, what has become of your Vicar's sister, Mrs. Mary? we drunk tea with her there, I remember; is she married yet? she was a very modest-looking gentlewoman.

Roy. So you remember her too? Well, I have pull'd down every foot of it, and built a new cart-house with the bricks. — Good commodious stalls for thirty horses, cousin Withrington; they beat Sir John Houndly's all to nothing: it is as clever, a well-constructed building as any in the country.

With. Has Sir John built a new house in the country?

Roy. No, no, the stables I say.

With. O! you are talking of the stables again.

Roy. But when I get the new addition to the mansion-house finished, that will be the grand improvement: the best carpenters' work in the country, my dear Sir, all well-season'd timber from Norway.

Humph. It is part of a disputed wreck, Sir, and if the law-suit about the right to it turns out in my master's favour, as it should do, it will be the cheapest built house in the country. O! let his honour alone for making a bargain.

With. So you have got a law-suit on your hands, Mr. Royston? I hope you are not much addicted

to this kind of amusement; you will find it a very expensive one.

Roy. Bless you, my good Sir, I am the most peaceable creature in the world, but I will suffer no man to impose upon me.

With. (*smiling.*) But you suffer the women sometimes to do so, do you not?

Humph. No, nor the women neither, Sir; for it was but th' other day that he prosecuted widow Gibson, for letting her chickens feed amongst his corn, and it was given in his honour's favour, as in right it should have been.

With. (*archly.*) And who was adjudged to pay the expences of court, Mr. Humphry?

Humph. Ay, to be sure, his honour was obliged to pay that.

With. (*archly.*) But the widow paid swingingly for it, I suppose?

Humph. Nay 'faith, after all, they but fined her in a sixpence; yet that always shew'd, you know, that she was in the wrong.

With. To be sure, Mr. Humphry; and the sixpence would indemnify your master for the costs of suit.

Humph. Nay, as a body may say, he might as well have let her alone, for any great matter he made of it that way; but it was very wrong in her, you know, Sir, to let her hens go amongst his honour's corn, when she knew very well she was too poor to make up the loss to his honour.

With. Say no more about it, my good Hum-

phry; you have vindicated your master most ably, and I have no doubts at all in regard to the propriety of his conduct.

Humph. (*very well pleased.*) Ay, thank God, I do sometimes make shift, in my poor way, to edge in a word for his honour.

Roy. (*not so well pleased.*) Thou art strangely given to prating this morning. (*to* Humph.) By the bye, cousin Withrington, I must consult you about my application to his Grace.

Humph. (*aside to* Royston, *pulling him by the sleeve.*) You forget to ask for the lady, Sir.

With. (*turning round.*) What did you say of his Grace?

Roy. No, no, I should — I meant — did I not say the gracious young lady your niece? I hope she is well.

With. (*smiling.*) She is very well; you shall go home with me, and visit her.

Roy. I am infinitely obliged to you, my worthy good Sir; I shall attend you with the greatest pleasure. Some ladies have no dislike to a good-looking gentleman-like man, although he may be past the bloom of his youth, cousin; however, young men do oftener carry the day, I believe: my son George is a good likely fellow; I expect him in Bath every hour. I shall have the honour of following you, my dear Sir. Remember my orders, Humphry.

[EXEUNT.

Enter HARWOOD *hastily, looking round as if he sought some one, and were disappointed.*

Har. (*alone.*) He is gone, I have miss'd the good uncle of Agnes — what is the matter with me now, that the sound of an old man's voice should agitate me thus? did I not feel it was the sound of something which belong'd to her? in faith! I believe, if her kitten was to mew, I should hasten to hold some intercourse with it. I can stay in this cursed house no longer, and when I do go out, there is but one way these legs of mine will carry me — the alley which leads to her dwelling — Well, well, I have been but six times there to-day already; I may have a chance of seeing her at last — I'll run after the old gentleman now — what a delightful witch it is!

[EXIT *hastily.*

SCENE II.

WITHRINGTON'S *house.* AGNES *and* MARIANE *discovered;* Mariane *reading a letter, and* Agnes *looking earnestly and gladly in her face.*

Ag. My friend Edward is well, I see; pray what does the traveller say for himself?

Mar. (*putting up the letter.*) You shall read it all by and by — every thing that is pleasant and kind.

Ag. Heaven prosper you both! you are happier than I am with all my fortune, Mariane; you have a sincere lover.

Mar. And so have you, Agnes: Harwood will

bear the trial: I have watch'd him closely, and I will venture my word upon him.

Ag. (*taking her in her arms.*) Now if thou art not deceiv'd, thou art the dearest sweet cousin on earth! (*Pausing and looking seriously.*) Ah no! it cannot be! I am but an ordinary-looking girl, as my uncle says. (*With vivacity.*) I would it were so!

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Loftus Prettyman and Mr. Opal.

Mar. I am at home. (*Exit* Servant.) I can't attend to these fools till I have put up my letter: do you receive them; I will soon return. [EXIT.

Enter SIR LOFTUS *and* OPAL, *dress'd pretty much alike.* SIR LOFTUS *makes a haughty distant bow to* AGNES, *and* OPAL *makes another very like it.*

Ag. Have the goodness to be seated, Sir, (*to Sir Loftus.*) Pray, Sir, (*to Opal, making a courteous motion as if she wish'd them to sit down.*) Miss Withrington will be here immediately. (Sir Loftus *makes a slight bow without speaking;* Opal *does the same, and both saunter about with their hats in their hands.*)

Ag. I hope you had a pleasant walk after we left you, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (*looking affectedly, as if he did not understand her.*) I beg pardon — O! you were along with Miss Withrington. (*Mumbling something which is not heard.*)

Ag. (*to* Op.) You are fond of that walk, Mr. Opal: I think I have seen you there frequently.

Op. Ma'am, you are very — (*mumbling something which is not heard, in the same manner with* Sir Loftus, *but still more absurd.*) I do sometimes walk — (*mumbling again.*)

Ag. (*to* Sir Loft.) The country is delightful round Bath.

Sir Loft. Ma'am!

Ag. Don't you think so, Mr. Opal.

Op. 'Pon honour I never attended to it. (*A long pause;* Sir Loftus *and* Opal *strut about conceitedly. Enter* Mariane, *and both of them run up to her at once, with great pleasure and alacrity.*)

Sir Loft. I hope I see Miss Withrington entirely recovered from the fatigues of the morning?

Mar. Pretty well, after the fatigue of dressing too, which is a great deal worse, Sir Loftus. (*carelessly.*)

Op. For the ball, I presume?

Sir Loft. I am delighted —

Mar. (*addressing herself to* Agnes, *without attending to him.*) Do you know what a provoking mistake my milliner has made?

Ag. I don't know.

Sir Loft. I hope, Madam—

Mar. (*to* Ag.) She has made up my dress with the colour of all others I dislike.

Op. This is very provoking indeed, I would—

Mar. (*still speaking to* Ag. *without attending to*

them.) And she has sent home my petticoat all patch'd over with scraps of foil, like a Mayday dress for a chimney-sweeper.

Sir Loft. (*thrusting in his face near* Mariane, *and endeavouring to be attended to.*) A very good comparison, ha, ha!

Op. (*thrusting in his face at the other side of her.*) Very good indeed, ha, ha, ha!

Mar. (*still speaking to* Agnes, *who winks significantly without attending to them.*) I'll say nothing about it, but never employ her again.

Sir Loft. (*going round to her other ear, and making another attempt.*) I am delighted, Miss Withrington—

Mar. (*carelessly.*) Are you, Sir Loftus? (*To* Agnes,) I have broken my fan, pray put it by with your own, my dear Agnes! (*Exit* Agnes *into the ajdoining room, and* Sir Loftus *gives* Opal *a significant look, upon which he retires to the bottom of the stage, and, after sauntering a little there,* Exit.)

Sir Loft. (*seeming a little piqued.*) If you would have done me the honour to hear me, Ma'am, I should have said, I am delighted to see you dress'd, as I hope I may presume from it you intend going to the ball to-night.

Mar. Indeed I am too capricious to know whether I do or not; do you think it will be pleasant?

Sir Loft. Very pleasant, if the devotions of a thousand admirers can make it so.

Mar. O! the devotions of a thousand admirers,

are like the good will of every body; one steady friendship is worth it all.

Sir Loft. From which may I infer, that one faithful adorer, in your eyes, outvalues all the thousand? (*affecting to be tender.*) Ah! so would I have Miss Withrington to believe! and if that can be any inducement, she will find such a one there, most happy to attend her.

Mar. Will she? I wonder who this may be: what kind of man is he, pray?

Sir Loft. (*with a conceited simper, at the same time in a pompous manner.*) Perhaps it will not be boasting too much to say, he is a man of fashion, and not altogether insignificant in the world.

Mar. Handsome and accomplish'd too, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. I must not presume, Ma'am, to boast of my accomplishments.

Mar. (*affecting a look of disappointment.*) O! lud! so it is yourself after all! I have not so much penetration as I thought. (*Yawning twice very wide.*) Bless me! what makes me yawn so? I forgot to visit my old woman, who sells the cakes, this morning; that must be it. (*Yawning again.*) Do you love gingerbread, Sir Loftus? (Sir Loftus *bites his lips, and struts proudly away to the other side of the stage, whilst* Agnes *peeps from the closet, and makes signs of encouragement to* Mariane.)

Mar. Well, after all, I believe it will be pleasant enough to go to the ball, with such an accomplished attendant.

Sir Loft. (*taking encouragement, and smothering his pride.*) Are you so obliging, Miss Withrington? will you permit me to have the happiness of attending you?

Mar. If you'll promise to make it very agreeable to me: you are fond of dancing, I suppose?

Sir Loft. I'll do any thing you desire me; but why throw away time so precious in the rough familiar exercise of dancing? is there not something more distinguished, more refined, in enjoying the conversation of those we love?

Mar. In the middle of a crowd, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. What is that crowd to us? we have nothing to do but to despise it: whilst they stare upon us with vulgar admiration, we shall talk together, smile together, attend only to each other, like beings of a different order.

Mar. O! that will be delightful! but don't you think we may just peep slyly over our shoulder now and then, to see them admiring us? (Sir Loftus *bites his lips again, and struts to the bottom of the stage, whilst* Agnes *peeps out from the closet and makes signs to* Mariane.)

Mar. (*carelessly pulling a small case from her pocket.*) Are not these handsome brilliants, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. (*very much struck with the sparkling of the diamonds, but pretending not to look at them.*) Upon my word, Ma'am, I am no judge of trinkets.

Mar. They are clumsily set; I shall give them to my cousin.

Sir Loft. (*forgetting himself.*) Why, Ma'am, do you seriously mean — They are of a most incomparable water!

Mar. (*archly.*) I thought you had not attended to them.

Sir Loft. (*tenderly.*) It is impossible, in the presence of Miss Withrington, to think of any thing but the cruelty with which she imposes silence on a heart that adores her.

Mar. Nay, you entirely mistake me, Sir Loftus; I am ready to hear you with the greatest good-nature imaginable.

Sir Loft. It is a theme, perhaps, on which my tongue would too long dwell.

Mar. O! not at all; I have leisure and a great deal of patience too, at present; I beg you would by no means hurry yourself.

Sir Loft. (*after a pause, looking foolish and embarrassed.*) Few words, perhaps, will better suit the energy of passion.

Mar. Just as you please, Sir Loftus; if you chuse to say it in a few words I am very well satisfied. (*Another pause.* Sir Loftus *very much embarrassed.*)

Enter WITHRINGTON *and* HARWOOD: Sir Loftus *seems much relieved.*

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Heaven be praised, they are come!

Mar. (*to* With.) I thought you were to have brought Mr. Royston with you.

With. He left us at a shop by the way, to en-

quire the price of turnip-seed; but he will be here by-and-by, if a hundred other things do not prevent him. (*Bows to* Sir Loftus; *then turns to* Harwood, *and speaks as if he resumed a conversation which had just been broken off, whilst* Sir Loftus *and* Mariane *retire to the bottom of the stage.*) I perfectly agree with you, Mr. Harwood, that the study and preparation requisite for your profession is not altogether a dry treasuring up of facts in the memory, as many of your young students conceive: he who pleads the cause of man before fellow-men, must know what is in the heart of man as well as in the book of records; and what study is there in nature so noble, so interesting as this?

Har. But the most pleasing part of our task, my good Sir, is not the least difficult. Where application only is wanting I shall not be left behind; for I am not without ambition, though the younger son of a family by no means affluent; and I have a widowed mother, whose hopes of seeing me respectable must not be disappointed. I assure you there is nothing — (*Listening.*)

With. Go on, Mr. Harwood, I have great pleasure in hearing you.

Har. I thought I heard a door move.

With. It is Agnes in the next room, I dare say; she is always making a noise.

Har. In the next room!

With. But you were going to assure me— Have the goodness to proceed.

Har. I was going to say — I rather think I said — I am sure — (*Listening again.*)

With. Poo! there is nobody there.

Har. Well, I said — I think I told you — In faith, my good Sir, I will tell you honestly, I have forgot what I meant to say.

With. No matter, you will remember it again. Ha, ha, ha! it puts me in mind of a little accident which happened to myself when I was in Lincoln's-Inn. Two or three of us met one evening, to be cheerful together, and—(*Whilst* Withrington *begins his story,* Agnes *enters softly from the adjoining closet unperceived; but* Harwood, *on seeing her, runs eagerly up to her, leaving* Withrington *astonished, in the middle of his discourse.*)

Har. (*to* Ag.) Ha! after so many false alarms, you steal upon us at last like a little thief.

Ag. And I steal something very good from you too, if you lose my uncle's story by this interruption; for I know by his face he was telling one.

With. Raillery is not always well-timed, Miss Agnes Withrington.

Ag. Nay, do not be cross with us, Sir. Mr. Harwood knew it was too good to be spent upon one pair of ears, so he calls in another to partake.

With. Get along, baggage.

Ag. So I will, uncle; for I know that only means with you, that I should place myself close to your elbow.

With. Well, two or three of us young fellows were met — did I not say—

Ag. At Lincoln's-Inn. (Withrington *hesitates.*)

Har. She has named it.

With. I know well enough it was there. And if I remember well, George Buckner was one of us. (Agnes *gives a gentle hem to suppress a cough.*)

Har. (*eagerly.*) You was going to speak, Miss Withrington?

Ag. No, indeed, I was not.

With. Well, George Buckner and two or three more of us — We were in a very pleasant humour that night — (Agnes, *making a slight motion of her hand to fasten some pin in her dress.*)

Har. (*eagerly.*) Do you not want something? (*To* Agnes.)

Ag. No, I thank you, I want nothing.

With. (*half amused, half peevish.*) Nay, say what you please to one another, for my story is ended.

Har. My dear Sir, we are perfectly attentive.

Ag. Now, pray, uncle!

With. (*to* Ag.) Now pray hold thy tongue. I forgot, I must consult the Court Calendar on Royston's account. (*Goes to a table, and takes up a red book, which he turns over.*)

Ag. (*to* Har.) How could you do so to my uncle? I would not have interrupted him for the world.

Har. Ay, chide me well; I dearly love to be chidden.

Ag. Do not invite me to it. I am said to have a very good gift that way, and you will soon have too much of it, I believe.

Har. O no! I would come every hour to be chidden!

Ag. And take it meekly too?

Har. Nay, I would have my revenge: I should call you scolding Agnes, and little Agnes, and my little Agnes.

Ag. You forget my dignity, Mr. Harwood.

Har. Oh! you put all dignity out of countenance! The great Mogul himself would forget his own in your presence.

Ag. But they are going to the garden: I am resolved to be one of the party. (*As she goes to join* Sir Loftus *and* Mariane, *who open a glass door leading to the garden,* Harwood *goes before, walking backwards, and his face turned to her.*) You will break your pate presently, if you walk with that retrograde step, like a dancing-master giving me a lesson. Do you think I shall follow you as if you had the fiddle in your hand?

Har. Ah, Miss Withrington! it is you who have got the fiddle, and I who must follow,

[EXEUNT *into the garden.*

Re-enter SIR LOFTUS *from the Garden, looking about for his hat.*

Sir Loft. O! here it is.

Enter OPAL.

Op. What, here alone?

Sir Loft. She is in the garden, I shall join her immediately.

Op. All goes on well, I suppose?

Sir Loft. Why, I don't know how it is — nobody hears us? (*Looking round.*) I don't know how it is, but she does not seem to comprehend perfectly in what light I am regarded by the world: that is to say, by that part of it which deserves to be called so.

Op. No! that is strange enough.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, she treats me with as much careless familiarity as if I were some plain neighbour's son in the country.

Op. 'Pon honour this is very strange.

Sir Loft. I am not without hopes of succeeding; but I will confess to you, I wish she would change her manner of behaving to me. On the word of a gentleman, it is shocking! Suppose you were to give her a hint, that she may just have an idea of the respect which is paid by every well-bred person — You understand me, Opal?

Op. O! perfectly. I shall give her to know that men like us, my dear friend —

Sir Loft. (*not quite satisfied.*) I don't know — Suppose you were to leave out all mention of yourself — Your own merit could not fail to be inferred.

Op. Well, I shall do so.

Sir Loft. Let us go to the garden. [EXEUNT.

Enter MISS ESTON, *speaking as she enters.*

I have been all over the town, and here I am at last, quite tired to death. How do you — (*Look-*

ing round.) O la! there is nobody here. Mr. Opal is gone too. I'll wait till they return. (*Takes up a book, then looks at herself in the glass, then takes up the book again. Yawning.*) 'Tis all about the imagination and the understanding, and I don't know what — I dare say it is good enough to read of a Sunday. (*Yawns, and lays it down.*) O la! I wish they would come!

Enter ROYSTON, *and takes* MISS ESTON *for* MISS WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Madam, I have the honour to be your very humble servant.—I hoped to have been here sooner, but I have been so overwhelmed with a multiplicity of affairs; and you know, Madam, when that is the case —

Est. (*taking the word out of his mouth.*) One is never master of one's time for a moment. I'm sure I have been all over the town this morning, looking after a hundred things, till my head has been put into such a confusion! "La, Ma'am!" said my milliner, "do take some lavender drops, you look so pale."—"Why," says I, "I don't much like to take them, Mrs. Trollop, they an't always good."

Roy. No more they are, Ma'am, you are very right; and if a silly fellow, I know, had taken my advice last year, and brought up the crops of lavender, he would have made —

Est. (*taking the word from him again.*) A very good fortune, I dare say. But people never will

take advice, which is very foolish in them, to be sure. Now I always take —

Roy. Be so good as to hear me, Ma'am.

Est. Certainly, Sir; for I always say, if they give me advice it is for my good, and why should not I take it?

Roy. (*edging in his word as fast as he can.*) And the damn'd foolish fellow too! I once saved him from being cheated in a horse; and —

Est. La! there are such cheats! a friend of mine bought a little lap-dog the other day —

Roy. But the horse, Ma'am, was —

Est. Not worth a guinea, I dare say. Why, they had the impudence to palm it on my friend—

(*Both speaking together.*)

Est. As a pretty little dog which had been bred

Roy. It was a good mettled horse, and might

E. up for a lady of quality, and when she had

R. have passed a good purchase at the money,

E. just made a cushion for it at the foot of her

R. but on looking, his fore feet— (*Stops short, and lets her go on.*)

E. own bed, she found it was all over mangy. I'm sure I would rather have a plain wholesome cat than the prettiest mangy dog in the kingdom.

Roy. Certainly, Ma'am. And I assure you the horse — for says I to the groom —

(*Both speaking together.*)

Est. O! I dare say it was — and who would

Roy. What is the matter with this pastern,

E. have suspected that a dog bred up on pur-

R. Thomas? it looks as if it were rubbed — (*Stops short again, and looks at her with astonishment as she goes on talking.*)

E. pose for a lady of quality, should be all over so! Nasty creature! It had spots upon its back as large as my watch. (*Taking up her watch.*) O la! I am half an hour after my time. My mantua-maker is waiting for me. Good morning, Sir!

[EXIT, *hastily.*

Roy. (*looking after her.*) Clack, clack, clack, clack! What a devil of a tongue she has got! 'Faith! George shall have her, and I'll e'en ask the place for myself. (*Looking out.*) But there is company in the garden: I'll go and join them.

[EXIT *to the garden.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. — Mr. WITHRINGTON's *House. A loud laughing without. Enter* ROYSTON, *in a great rage.*

Roy. Ay, ay, laugh away, laugh away, Madam! you'll weep by-and-by, mayhap. (*Pauses and listens; laughing still heard.*) What an infernal noise the jade makes! I wish she had a peck of chaff in her mouth! I am sure it is wide enough to hold it.

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. I have been seeking your honour ever y where—Lord, Sir! I have something to tell you.

Roy. Confound your tales! don't trouble me with a parcel of nonsense.

Humph. (*staring at him, and hearing the laughing without.*) For certain, your honour, there's somebody in this house merrier than you or I.

Roy. Damn you, Sir! how do you know I am not merry? Go home, and do what I ordered you directly. If that fellow Jonathan is not in the way, I'll horse-whip him within an inch of his life. Begone, I say; why do you stand staring at me like a madman? [EXEUNT.

Enter MARIANE *and* AGNES, *by opposite sides.*

Mar. (*holding her sides.*) I shan't be able to laugh again for a month.

Ag. You have got rid of one lover, who will scarcely attempt you a second time. I have met him hurrying through the hall, and muttering to himself like a madman. It is not your refusal of his son that has so roused him.

Mar. No, no; he began his courtship in a doubtful way, as if he would recommend a gay young husband to my choice; but a sly compliment to agreeable men of a middle age, brought him soon to speak plainly for himself.

Ag. But how did you provoke him so?

Mar. I will tell you another time. It is later than I thought. (*Looking at her watch.*)

Ag. Don't go yet. How stands it with you and a certain gentleman I recommended to your notice?

Mar. O! he does not know whether I am tall or short, brown or fair, foolish or sensible, after all the pains I have taken with him; he has eyes, ears, and understanding, for nobody but you, Agnes, and I will attempt him no more. He spoke to me once with animation in his countenance, and I turned round to listen to him eagerly, but it was only to repeat to me something you had just said, which, to deal plainly with you, had not much wit in it neither. I don't know how it is, he seemed to me at first a pleasanter man than he proves to be.

Ag. Say not so, Mariane! he proves to be most admirable!

Mar. Well, be it so; he cannot prove better than I wish him to do, and I can make up my list without him. I have a love-letter from an Irish baronet in my pocket, and Opal will declare himself presently. — I thought once he meant only to plead for his friend; but I would not let him off so, for I know he is a mercenary creature. I have flattered him a little at the expence of Sir Loftus, and I hope, ere long, to see him set up for a great man upon his own bottom.

Ag. So it was only to repeat to you something that I had been saying?

Mar. Ha! you are thinking of this still. I be-

lieve, indeed, he sets down every turn of your eye in his memory, and acts it all over in secret.

Ag. Do you think so! give me your hand, my dear Mariane; you are a very good cousin to me—Marks every turn of mine eye! I am not quite such an ordinary girl as my uncle says—My complexion is as good as your own, Mariane, if it were not a little sun-burnt. (Mariane *smiles.*) Yes, smile at my vanity as you please; for what makes me vain, makes me so good-humoured too, that I will forgive you. But here comes uncle. (*Skipping as she goes to meet him.*) I am light as an air-ball! (*Enter* Mr. Withrington.) My dear Sir, how long you have been away from us this morning! I am delighted to see you so pleased and so happy.

With. (*with a very sour face.*) You are mistaken, young lady, I am not so pleased as you think.

Ag. O no, Sir! you are very good-humoured. Isn't he, Mariane?

With. But I say I am in a very bad humour. Get along with your foolery!

Ag. Is it really so? Let me look in your face, uncle. To be sure your brows are a little knit, and your eyes a little gloomy, but that is nothing to be called bad humour; if I could not contrive to look crabbeder than all this comes to, I would never pretend to be ill-humoured in my life. (Mariane *and* Agnes *take him by the hands, and begin to play with him.*)

With. No, no, young ladies, I am not in a

mood to be played with. I can't approve of every farce you please to play off in my family; nor to have my relations affronted, and driven from my house for your entertainment.

Mar. Indeed, Sir, I treated Royston better than he deserved; for he would not let me have time to give a civil denial, but ran on planning settlements and jointures, and a hundred things besides: I could just get in my word to stop his career with a flat refusal, as he was about to provide for our descendants of the third generation. O! if you had seen his face then, uncle!

With. I know very well how you have treated him.

Ag. Don't be angry, Sir. What does a man like Royston care for a refusal? he is only angry that he can't take the law of her for laughing at him.

With. Let this be as it may, I don't chuse to have my house in a perpetual bustle from morning till night, with your plots and your pastimes. There is no more order nor distinction kept up in my house, than if it were a cabin in Kamschatka, and common to a whole tribe. In every corner of it I find some visitor, or showman, or milliner's apprentice, loitering about: my best books are cast upon footstools and window-seats, and my library is littered over with work-bags; dogs, cats, and kittens, take possession of every chair, and refuse to be disturbed: and the very beggar children go hopping before my door with their half-

eaten scraps in their hands, as if it were the entry to a workhouse.

Ag. (*clapping his shoulder gently.*) Now don't be impatient, my dear Sir, and every thing shall be put into such excellent order as shall delight you to behold. And as for the beggar children, if any of them dare but to set their noses near the house I'll — What shall I do with them, Sir? (*Pauses, and looks in his face, which begins to relent.*) I believe we must not be very severe with them after all. (*Both take his hands and coax him.*)

With. Come, come, off hands, and let me sit down. I am tired of this.

Ag. Yes, uncle, and here is one seat, you see, with no cat upon it. (Withrington *sits down, and* Agnes *takes a little stool and sits down at his feet, curling her nose as she looks up to him, and making a good-humoured face.*)

With. Well, it may be pleasant enough, girls; but allow me to say, all this playing, and laughing, and hoidening about, is not gentlewomanlike; nay, I might say, is not maidenly. A high-bred elegant woman, is a creature which man approaches with awe and respect; but nobody would think of accosting you with such impressions, any more than if you were a couple of young female tinkers.

Ag. Don't distress yourself about this, Sir; we shall get the men to bow to us, and tremble be-

fore us too, as well as e'er a hoop petticoat or long ruffles of them all.

With. Tremble before you! ha, ha, ha! (*To* Agnes.) Who would tremble before thee, dost thou think?

Ag. No despicable man, perhaps: What think you of your favourite, Harwood?

With. Poo, poo, poo! he is pleased with thee as an amusing and good-natured creature, and thou thinkest he is in love with thee, forsooth.

Ag. A good-natured creature! he shall think me a vixen and be pleased with me.

With. No, no, not quite so far gone, I believe.

Ag. I'll bet you two hundred pounds that it is so. If I win, you shall pay it to Mariane for wedding trinkets; and if you win, you may build a couple of alms-houses.

With. Well, be it so. We shall see, we shall see.

Mar. Indeed we shall see you lose your bet, uncle.

With. (*to* Mar.) Yes, baggage, I shall have your prayers against me, I know.

Enter SERVANT, *and announces* Mr. OPAL. *Enter* OPAL.

Op. (*to* Mar.) I hope I have the pleasure of seeing Miss Withrington well this morning. (*Bows distantly to* Withrington, *and still more so to* Agnes, *after the manner of* Sir Loftus.)

With. Your servant, Sir.

Mar. (*to* Op.) How did you like the ball last night? There was a gay, genteel-looking company.

Op. (*with affected superiority.*) Excepting Lord Saunter, and Lord Poorly, and Sir Loftus, and one or two more of us, I did not know a soul in the room.

With. There were some pretty girls there, Mr. Opal.

Op. I am very glad to hear it, 'pon honour. I did not — (*Mumbling.*)

With. (*aside.*) Affected puppy! I can't bear to look at him. [EXIT.

Mar. (*assuming a gayer air as* Withrington *goes out.*) You will soon have a new beau to enrich your circle, Mr. Opal, the handsome and accomplished Colonel Beaumont. He is just returned from abroad, and is now quite the fashion. (*To* Agnes.) Don't you think Mr. Opal resembles him?

Ag. O! very much indeed.

Op. (*bowing very graciously.*) Does he not resemble Sir Loftus too? I mean in his air and his manner.

Mar. O! not at all! That haughty coldness of his is quite old-fashioned now; so unlike the affable frankness so much admired in the Colonel: you have seen him, I presume?

Op. I have never had that honour.

Mar. Then you will not be displeased at the likeness we have traced when you do.

Op. (*relaxing from his dignity, and highly pleased.*) The greatest pleasure of my life, Ma'am, will be to resemble what pleases you. (Mariane *gives* Agnes *the wink, and she retires to the bottom of the stage.*)

Mar. You flatter me infinitely.

Op. Ah! call it not flattery, charming Miss Withrington! for now I will have the boldness to own to you frankly, I have been, since the first moment I beheld you, your most sincere, your most passionate admirer. Upon hon—(*correcting himself*) 'faith I have!

Mar. Nothing but my own want of merit can make me doubt of any thing Mr. Opal asserts upon his honour or his faith. (*Turning and walking towards the bottom of the stage, whilst* Opal *follows her talking in dumb show; then* Agnes *joins them, and they all come forward to the front.*)

Ag. (*to* Mar.) How much that turn of his head puts me in mind of the Colonel!

Mar. So it does, my Agnes. (*To* Opal.) Pray have the goodness to hold it so for a moment! There now, it is just the very thing. (Opal *holds his head in a constrained ridiculous posture, and then makes a conceited bow.*) His very manner of bowing too! one would swear it was him!

Ag. Yes, only the Colonel is more familiar, more easy in his carriage.

Op. O! Ma'am! I assure you I have formerly

— It is my natural manner to be remarkably easy — But I — (*pauses.*)

Mar. Have never condescended to assume any other than your natural manner, I hope.

Op. O! not at all, I detest affectation; there is nothing I detest so much — But upon my soul! I can't tell how it is, I have been graver of late. I am, indeed, sometimes thoughtful.

Mar. O fy upon it! don't be so any more. It is quite old-fashioned and ridiculous now. (*To* Agnes, *winking significantly.*) Did you see my gloves any where about the room, cousin?

Op. I'll find them. (*Goes to look for them with great briskness.* — Servant *announces* Miss Eston.)

Op. Pest take her! I stared at her once in a mistake, and she has ogled and followed me ever since.

Enter Miss Eston, *running up to* Mariane *and* Agnes, *and pretending not to see* Opal, *though she cannot help looking askance at him while she speaks.*

Est. O my dear creatures! you can't think how I have longed to see you. Mrs. Thomson kept me so long this morning, and you know she is an intolerable talker. (*Pretending to discover* Opal.) O! how do you do, Mr. Opal? I declare I did not observe you!

Op. (*with a distant haughty bow.*) I am obliged to you, Ma'am.

Est. I did see your figure, indeed, but I mistook it for Sir Loftus.

Op. (*correcting himself, and assuming a cheerful frank manner.*) O Ma'am! you are very obliging to observe me at all. I believe Prettyman and I may be nearly of the same height. (*Looking at his watch.*) I am beyond my appointment, I see. Excuse me; I must hurry away. [EXIT *hastily.*

Est. (*looking after him with marks of disappointment.*) I am very glad he is gone. He does so haunt me, and stare at me, I am quite tired of it. The first time I ever saw him, you remember how he looked me out of countenance. I was resolved before I came not to take notice of him.

Mar. So you knew you should find him here, then?

Est. O la! one don't know of a morning who one may meet; as likely him as any body else, you know. I really wonder now what crotchet he has taken into his head about me. Do you know, last night, before twilight, I peeped over the blind, and saw him walking with slow pensive steps, under my window.

Mar. Well, what happened then?

Est. I drew in my head, you may be sure; but a little while after, I peeped out again, and, do you know, I saw him come out of the perfumer's shop, just opposite to my dressing-room, where he had been all the while.

Mar. Very well, and what happened next?

Est. La! nothing more. But was it not very

odd? What should he be doing all that time in that little paltry shop? The great shop near the Circus is the place where every body buys perfumery.

Ag. No, there is nothing very odd in Mr. Opal's buying perfumes at a very paltry shop, where he might see and be seen by a very pretty lady.

Est. (*with her face brightening up.*) Do you think so? O no! you don't so?

Ag. To be sure I do. But I know what is very strange.

Est. O la, dear creature! What is it?

Ag. He bought his perfumes there before you came, when there was no such inducement. Is not that very odd? (Eston *pauses, and looks silly.*)

Enter Mr. Withrington, *but upon perceiving* Eston, *bows and retreats again.*

Est. (*recovering herself.*) Ha! how do you do, Mr. Withrington? I have just seen your friend, Lady Fade. Poor dear soul! she says —

With. I am sorry, Ma'am, it is not in my power at present — I am in a hurry, I have an appointment. Your servant, Ma'am. [Exit.

Est. Well, now, this is very odd! Wherever I go, I find all the men just going out to some appointment. O, I forgot to tell you, Mrs. Thomson has put a new border to her drawing-room, just like the one up stairs. Has it not a dark blue ground? (*To* Mariane.)

Mar. I'm sure I cannot tell, let us go up stairs and see. [EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

Before Mr. WITHRINGTON's *House. Enter* HARWOOD.

Well, here I am again, yet devil take me if I can muster up resolution enough to touch the knocker! what a fool was I to call twice this morning! for with what face can I now visit her again? The old gentleman will look strangely at me; the fine heiress her cousin will stare at me; nay, the very servants begin already to smile with impertinent significance, as I inquire with conscious foolishness, if the ladies are at home. Then Agnes herself will look so drolly at me—Ah! but she will look so pleasantly too!—'Faith! I'll e'en go. (*Goes to the door, puts his hand up to the knocker, stops short, and turns from it again. Pauses.*) What a fool am I, to stand thinking about it here. If I were but fairly in the room with her, and the first salutation over, I should not care if the devil himself made faces at me. Oh no! every body is good-humoured, every thing is happy that is near her! the kitten who plays by her side takes hold of her gown unchidden. How pleasant it is to love what is so blessed! I should hate the fairest woman on earth if she were not of a sweet temper. Come, come; every thing favours me here, but my own foolish fancies. (*As he*

goes to the door again, it opens, and enters from the house, Betty, *crying, with a bundle in her hand.*)

Bet. O dear me! O dear me!

Har. What is the matter with you, my good girl?

Bet. I'm sure it was not my fault, and she has abused me worser than a heathen.

Har. That is hard indeed.

Bet. Indeed it is, Sir; and all for a little nasty essence-bottle, which was little better than a genteel kind of a stink at the best; and I am sure I did but take out the stopper to smell to it, when it came to pieces in my hand like an egg-shell. If bottles will break, how can I help it? but la! Sir, there is no speaking reason to my mistress; she is as furious and as ill-tempered as a dragon.

Har. Don't distress yourself; Miss Agnes Withrington will make amends to you for the severity of your mistress.

Bet. She truly! it is she herself who is my mistress, and she has abused me — O dear me! — If it had been Miss Withrington, she would not have said a word to me; but Miss Agnes is so cross, and so ill-natured, there is no living in the house with her.

Har. Girl, you are beside yourself!

Bet. No, Sir, God be praised! but she is beside herself, I believe. Does she think I am going to live in her service to be call'd names so, and compared to a blackamoor too? If I had been waiting-maid to the queen, she would not have compared

me to a blackamoor, and will I take such usage from her?— what do I care for her cast gowns?

Har. Well, but she is liberal to you?

Bet. She liberal! she'll keep every thing that is worth keeping to herself, I warrant; and Lord pity those who are bound to live with her! I'll seek out a new place for myself, and let the devil, if he will, wait upon her next, in the shape of a blackamoor: they will be fit company for one another; and if he gets the better of her at scolding, he is a better devil than I take him for. And I am sure, Sir, if you were to see her—

Har. Get along! get along! you are too passionate yourself, to be credited.

Bet. I know what I know; I don't care what nobody says, no more I do; I know who to complain to. [EXIT, *grumbling.*

Har. (*alone.*) What a malicious toad it is! I dare say now, she has done something very provoking. I cannot bear these pert chamber-maids; the very sight of them is offensive to me.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Good evening to your honour; can you tell me if Mr. Withrington be at home? for as how, my master has sent me with a message to him.

Har. (*impatiently.*) Go to the house and inquire; I know nothing about it. (Jonathan *goes to the house.*)

Har. (*alone, after musing some time.*) That girl has put me out of all heart though, with her

cursed stories. — No, no, it cannot be — it is impossible!

Re-enter JONATHAN *from the house, scratching his head, and looking behind him.*

Jon. 'Faith there is hot work going on amongst them! thank heaven I am out again.

Har. What do you mean?

Jon. 'Faith! that little lady, in that there house, is the best hand at a scold, saving Mary Macmurrock, my wife's mother, that ever my two blessed eyes looked upon. Lord, Sir, (*going nearer him*) her tongue goes ting, ting, ting, as shrill as the bell of any pieman; and then, Sir, (*going nearer him*) her two eyes look out of her head, as though they were a couple of glow-worms! and then, Sir, he, he, he! (*Laughing and going close up to him.*) She claps her little hands so, as if —

Har. Shut your fool's mouth and be damn'd to you! (*Kicks* Jonathan *off the stage in a violent passion; then leans his back to a tree, and seems thoughtful for some time and very much troubled.*)

Enter AGNES *from the house, with a stormy look on her face.*

Ag. So you are still loitering here, Harwood? you have been very much amused, I suppose, with the conversation of those good folks you have talked with.

Har. No, not much amused, Madam, though

somewhat astonished, I own; too much astonished, indeed, to give it any credit.

Ag. O! it is true though; I have been very cross with the girl, and very cross with every body; and if you don't clear up that dismal face of yours, I shall be cross with you too: what could possess you to stay so long under the chestnut-tree, a little while ago, always appearing as if you were coming to the house, and always turning back again?

Har. (*eagerly.*) And is it possible, you were then looking at me, and observing my motions?

Ag. Indeed I was just going to open my window and beckon to you, when that creature broke my phial of sweet essence, and put me quite out of temper.

Har. Hang the stupid jade! I could —

Ag. So you are angry too? O! well done! we are fit company for one another. Come along with me, come, come! (*impatiently. As she turns to go, something catches hold of her gown.*) What is this? confounded thing! (*Pulls away her gown in a passion, and tears it.*)

Har. (*aside.*) Witch that she is! she should be beaten for her humours. I will not go with her.

Ag. (*looking behind.*) So you won't go in with me? good evening to you then: we did want a fourth person to make up a party with us; but since you don't like it, we shall send to Sir Loftus, or Opal, or Sir Ulock O'Grady, or some other good creature; I dare say Sir Loftus will come.

Har. (*half aside.*) Cursed coxcomb! If he sets his snout within the door, I'll pistol him.

Ag. (*overhearing him.*) Ha! well said! you will make the best company in the world. Come along, come along! (*He follows her half unwillingly.*) Why don't you offer your arm here? don't you see how rough it is? (*He offers his arm.*) Poo, not that arm! (*Offers her the other.*) Poo, not so neither, on t'other side of me.

Har. What a humoursome creature you are! I have offer'd you two arms, and neither of them will do; do you think I have a third to offer you?

Ag. You are a simpleton, or you would have half a dozen at my service.

[EXEUNT *into the house.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — HARWOOD's *Lodgings. He is discovered walking about with an irregular disturbed step, his hair and dress all neglected and in disorder; he comes forward to the front of the stage.*

Har. I have neither had peace nor sleep since I beheld her; O! that I had never known her! or known her only such as my first fond fancy conceived her!—I would my friend were come; I will open my heart to him: he perhaps will speak comfort to me; for surely that temper must be violent

indeed, which generous affection cannot subdue; and she must be extravagant beyond all bounds of nature, who would ruin the fond husband who toils for her. No, no, nature makes not such, but when she sets her scowling mark upon their forehead to warn us from our ruin. (*Pauses, walks up and down, then comes forward again.*) Insipid constitutional good nature is a tiresome thing: passion subdued by reason is worth a score of it — and passion subdued by love! — O! that were better still! — yesterday, as I entered her door, I heard her name me to her cousin, with so much gentle softness in her voice, I blest her as she spoke! — Ah! if this were so, all might still be well. Who would not struggle with the world for such a creature as this? — Ay, and I must struggle — O! that this head of mine would give over thinking but for one half hour? (*Rings the bell.*)

Enter THOMAS.

What brings you here, Thomas?

Thom. Your bell rung, Sir.

Har. Well, well, I did want something, but I have forgot it. Bring me a glass of water. (EXIT Thomas. Harwood *sits down by a small writing-table, and rests his head upon his hand. Re-enter* Thomas *with the water.*) You have made good haste, Thomas.

Thom. I did make good haste, Sir, lest you should be impatient with me.

Har. I am sometimes impatient with you, then?

I fear indeed I have been too often so of late; but you must not mind it, Thomas; I mean you no unkindness.

Thom. Lord love you, Sir, I know that very well! a young gentleman who takes an old man into his service, because other gentlemen do not think him quick enough, nor smart enough for them, as your honour has taken me, can never mean to show him any unkindness: I know it well enough; I am only uneasy because I fear you are not so well of late.

Har. I thank you, Thomas, I am not very well — I am notill neither; I shall be better. (*Pauses.*) I think I have heard you say you were a soldier in your youth?

Thom. Yes, Sir.

Har. And you had a wife too, a woman of fiery mettle, to bear about your knapsack?

Thom. Yes, Sir, my little stout spirity Jane; she had a devil of a temper, to be sure.

Har. Yet you loved her notwithstanding?

Thom. Yes, to be sure I did, as it were, bear her some kindness.

Har. I'll be sworn you did! — and you would have been very sorry to have parted with her.

Thom. Why death parts the best of friends, Sir; we lived but four years together.

Har. And so your little spirity Jane was taken so soon away from you? Give me thy hand, my good Thomas. (*Takes his hand and presses it.*)

Thom. (*perceiving tears in his eyes.*) Lord Sir!

don't be so distressed about it: she did die, to be sure; but truly, between you and I, although I did make a kind of whimpering at the first, I was not ill pleased afterwards to be rid of her; for, truly, Sir, a man who has got an ill-tempered wife, has but a dog's life of it at the best. — Will you have your glass of water, Sir?

Har. (*looking at him with dissatisfaction.*) No, no, take it away; I have told you a hundred times not to bring me that chalky water from the court-yard. (*Turns away from him.*)

Enter Colonel HARDY. — HARWOOD *makes signs to* Thomas, *and he goes out.*

Har. My dear Colonel, this is kind: I am very glad to see you.

Col. It is so seldom that a young fellow has any inclination for the company of an old man, that I should feel myself vain of the summons you have sent me, were I not afraid, from this dishabille, my dear Harwood, that you are indisposed.

Har. You are very good; I am not indisposed. I have indeed been anxious — I rested indiffently last night — I hope I see you well.

Col. Very well, as you may guess from the speed I have made in coming to you. These legs do not always carry me so fast. But you have something particular to say to me.

Har. I am very sensible of your friendship — Pray, Colonel, be seated. — (*They sit down — a long pause* — Colonel Hardy, *like one expecting to hear*

something; Harwood, *like one who knows not how to begin.*) — There are moments in a man's life, Colonel Hardy, when the advice of a friend is of the greatest value; particularly one, who has also been his father's friend.

Col. My heart very warmly claims both those relations to you, Harwood; and I shall be happy to advise you as well as I am able.

Har. (*after another pause.*) I am about to commence a laborious profession — the mind is naturally anxious — (*Pauses.*)

Col. But you are too capable of exercising well that profession, to suffer much uneasiness.

Har. Many a man with talents superior to mine has sunk beneath the burden.

Col. And many a man, with talents vastly inferior to yours, has borne it up with credit.

Har. Ah! what avails the head with an estranged heart?

Col. You are disgusted then with your profession, and have, perhaps, conceived more favourably of mine? I am sorry for it: I hoped to see you make a figure at the bar; and your mother has long set her heart upon it.

Har. (*with energy.*) O no! she must not — she shall not be disappointed! — Pardon me, my expressions have gone somewhat wide of my meaning — I meant to have consulted you in regard to other difficulties —

Col. And pardon me likewise for interrupting you; but it appears to me, that an unlearned

soldier is not a person to be consulted in these matters.

Har. It was not altogether of these matters I meant to speak — But, perhaps, we had better put it off for the present.

Col. No, no.

Har. Perhaps we had better walk out a little way: we may talk with less restraint as we go.

Col. No, no, there are a thousand impertinent people about. Sit down again, and let me hear every thing you wish to say.

Har. (*pausing, hesitating, and much embarrassed.*) There are certain attachments in which a man's heart may be so deeply interested — I would say so very — or rather I should say so strangely engaged, that — (*hesitates and pauses.*)

Col. O, here it is! I understand it now. But pray don't be so foolish about it, Harwood! You are in love?

Har. (*appearing relieved.*) I thank your quickness, my dear Colonel; I fear it is somewhat so with me.

Col. And whence your fear? Not from the lady's cruelty?

Har. No, there is another bar in my way, which does, perhaps, too much depress my hopes of happiness.

Col. You have not been prudent enough to fall in love with an heiress?

Har. No, my dear Sir, I have not.

Col. That is a great mistake, to be sure, Har-

wood; yet many a man has not advanced the less rapidly in his profession, for having had a portionless wife to begin the world with. It is a spur to industry.

Har. (*looking pleased at him.*) Such sentiments are what I expected from Colonel Hardy; and, were it not for female failings, there would be little risk in following them. — I don't know how to express it — I am perhaps too delicate in these matters — We ought not to expect a faultless woman.

Col. No, surely; and, if such a woman were to be found, she would be no fit companion for us.

Har. (*getting up, and pressing the Colonel's hand between his.*) My dearest friend! your liberality and candour delight me! — I do indeed believe that many a man has lived very happily with a woman far from being faultless: and, after all, where is the great injury he sustains, if she should be a little violent and unreasonable?

Col. (*starting up from his seat.*) Nay, heaven defend us from a violent woman; for that is the devil himself! (*Seeing* Harwood's *countenance change.*) — What is the matter with you, Harwood? She is not ill-tempered, I hope?

Har. (*hesitating.*) Not — not absolutely so — She is of a very quick and lively disposition, and is apt to be too hasty and unguarded in her emotions. — I do not, perhaps, make myself completely understood.

Col. O, I understand you perfectly. — I have

known ladies of this lively disposition, very hasty and unguarded too in their demands upon a man's pocket as well as his patience; but she may be of a prudent and economical turn. Is it so, Harwood?

Har. (*throwing himself into a chair very much distressed.*) I do not say it is, Colonel.

Col. (*putting his hand kindly upon his shoulder.*) I am sorry to distress you so much, my dear friend, yet it must be so. I see how it is with you: pardon the freedom of friendship, but indeed an expensive and violent-temper'd woman is not to be thought of: he who marries such a one forfeits all peace and happiness. Pluck up some noble courage, and renounce this unfortunate connexion.

Har. (*starting up.*) Renounce it, Colonel Hardy? Is it from you I receive so hard, so unfeeling a request, who has suffered so much yourself from the remembrance of an early attachment? I thought to have been pitied by you.

Col. I was early chagrined with the want of promotion, and disappointed in my schemes of ambition, which gave my countenance something of a melancholy cast, I believe, and the ladies have been kind enough to attribute it to the effects of hopeless love; but how could you be such a ninny, my dear Harwood?

Har. I am sorry, Sir, we have understood one another so imperfectly.

Col. Nay, nay, my young friend, do not carry

yourself so distantly with me. You have sought a love-lorn companion, and you have found a plain spoken friend. I am sorry to give you pain: deal more openly with me: when I know who this bewitching creature is, I shall, perhaps, judge more favourably of your passion.

Har. It is Miss Agnes Withrington.

Col. Cousin to Miss Withrington the heiress?

Har. Yes, it is she. What have I said to amaze you?

Col. You amaze me, indeed! — That little — forgive me if I were almost to say, — plain-looking girl! Friendship would sympathize in your feelings; but, pardon me, Harwood, you have lost your wits.

Har. I believe I have, Colonel, which must plead my pardon, likewise, for expecting this friendship from you.

Col. You distress me.

Har. I distress myself still more, by suffering so long the pain of this conversation.

Col. Let us end it, then, as soon as you please. When you are in a humour to listen to reason, I shall be happy to have the honour of seeing you.

Har. When I am in that humour, Sir, I will not balk it so much as to intrude upon your time.

Col. Let me see you, then, when you are not in that humour, and I shall more frequently have the pleasure of your company. (*Both bow coldly.*)

[Exit Colonel Hardy.

Har. (*alone.*) What a fool was I to send for this man! — A little plain-looking girl! What do the people mean? They will drive me mad amongst them. Why does not the little witch wear high heels to her shoes, and stick a plume of feathers in her cap? Oh! they will drive me distracted! [EXIT.

SCENE II.

Mr. WITHRINGTON's *House.* AGNES *discovered embroidering at a small table,* HARWOOD *standing by her, and hanging fondly over her as she works.*

Har. How pretty it is! Now you put a little purple on the side of the flower.

Ag. Yes, a very little shade.

Har. And now a little brown upon that.

Ag. Even so.

Har. And thus you work up and down, with that tiny needle of yours, till the whole flower is completed. (*Pauses, still looking at her working.*) Why, Agnes, you little witch! you're doing that leaf wrong.

Ag. You may pick it out then, and do it better for me. I'm sure you have been idle enough all the morning, it is time you were employed about something.

Har. And so I will. (*sitting down by her, and taking hold of the work.*)

Ag. (*covering the flower with her hand.*) O! no, no!

Har. Take away that little perverse hand, and let me begin. (*Putting his hand upon hers.*)

Ag. What a good for nothing creature you are! you can do nothing yourself, and you will suffer nobody else to do any thing. I should have had the whole pattern finished before now, if you had not loitered over my chair so long.

Har. So you can't work when I look over you! Then I have some influence upon you? O you sly girl! you are caught in your own words at last.

Ag. Indeed, Harwood, I wish you would go home again to your law-books and your precedent-hunting; you have mispent a great deal of time here already.

Har. Is it not better to be with you in reality than only in imagination? Ah! Agnes! you little know what my home studies are. — Law, said you! how can I think of law, when your countenance looks upon me from every black lettered page that I turn? when your figure fills the empty seat by my side, and your voice speaks to me in the very mid-day stillness of my chamber? Ah! my sweet Agnes! you will not believe what a foolish fellow I have been since I first saw you.

Ag. Nay, Harwood, I am not at all incredulous of the fact; it is only the cause of it which I doubt.

Har. Saucy girl! I must surely be revenged upon you for all this.

Ag. I am tired of this work. (*Getting up.*)

Har. O! do not give over.—Let me do something for you — Let me thread your needle for you — I can thread one most nobly.

Ag. There then. (*Gives him a needle and silk.*)

Har. (*pretending to scratch her hand with it.*) So ought you to be punished. (*Threads it awkwardly.*)

Ag. Ay, nobly done, indeed! but I shall work no more to-day.

Har. You must work up my needleful.

Ag. I am to work a fool's cap in the corner by-and-by; I shall keep your needleful for that. I am going to walk in the garden.

Har. And so am I.

Ag. You are?

Har. Yes, I am. Go where you will, Agnes, to the garden or the field, the city or the desert, by sea or by land, I must e'en go too. I will never be where you are not, but when to be where you are is impossible.

Ag. There will be no getting rid of you at this rate, unless some witch will have pity upon me, and carry me up in the air upon her broomstick.

Har. There I will not pretend to follow you; but as long as you remain upon the earth, Agnes, I cannot find in my heart to budge an inch from your side.

Ag. You are a madman!

Har. You are a sorceress!

Ag. You are an idler!

Har. You are a little mouse!

Ag. Come, come, get your hat then, and let us go. (*Aside, while he goes to the bottom of the stage for his hat.*) Bless me! I have forgot to be ill-humour'd all this time. [EXIT, *hastily.*

Har. (*coming forward.*) Gone for her cloke, I suppose. How delightful she is! how pleasant every change of her countenance! How happy must his life be, spent even in cares and toil, whose leisure hours are cheered with such a creature as this.

Ag. (*without, in an angry voice.*) Don't tell me so; I know very well how it is, and you shall smart for it too, you lazy, careless, impudent fellow! And, besides all this, how dare you use my kitten so?

Har. (*who listened with a rueful face.*) Well, now, but this is humanity: she will not have a creature ill used. — I wish she would speak more gently though.

Ag. (*entering.*) Troublesome, provoking, careless fellow!

Har. It is very provoking in him to use the poor kitten ill.

Ag. So it is; but it is more provoking still to mislay my clogs, as he does.

Enter Servant *with clogs.*

Ser. Here they are, Madam.

Ag. Bring them here I say? (*looks at them.*) These are Miss Withrington's clogs, you blockhead! (*Throws them to the other side of the stage in*

a passion.) I must go without them, I find. (*To* Harwood.) What are you musing about? If you don't chuse to go with me, good morning.

Har. (*sighing deeply.*) Ah, Agnes! you know too well that I cannot stay behind you. [EXEUNT.

SCENE III.

Miss WITHRINGTON's *Dressing-room. Enter* MARIANE, *who turns back again towards the door, and calls to* AGNES *without.*

Mar. Agnes, cousin Agnes! where are you going?

Ag. (*without.*) I am returning to Miss Eston, whom I have left in the parlour, talking to the dog.

Mar. Well, let her talk to the dog a little longer, and let me talk to you.

Enter AGNES.

I have set Betty to watch at the higher windows to give notice of Sir Loftus's approach, that we may put ourselves in order to receive him; for I am resolved to have one bout more with him, and discharge him for good: I am quite tired of him now.

Ag. Do you expect him.

Mar. I am pretty sure he will come about this time, and I must be prepared for him. I have a good mind to tell him at once, I despise him, and that will be a plain, easy way of finishing the business.

Ag. No, no, my sweet Mariane! we must send him off with eclat. You have played your part

very well hitherto; keep it up but for the last time, and let Miss Eston and I go into the closet and enjoy it.

Mar. Well then, do so: I shall please you for this once.

Enter BETTY, *in haste.*

Bet. (*to* Mar.) Sir Loftus is just coming up the side path, Madam, and he'll be at the door immediately.

Ag. I'll run and bring Eston directly. [EXIT.

Mar. (*looking at the door of the closet.*) Yes, it is very thin: they will hear well, and see through the key-hole.

Re-enter AGNES *with* Miss ESTON, *in a great hurry.*

Est. La! I have torn my gown in my haste.

Ag. Come along, come along!

Est. It is not so bad a tear though as Mrs. Thomson got the —

Ag. Come, come, we must not stay here. (*Pushes* Eston *into the closet and follows.* Mariane *and* Betty *place a table with books and a chair near the front of the stage.*)

Est. (*looking from the closet.*) La! Mariane, how I long to hear you and him begin. I shall be so delighted!

Mar. For heaven's sake shut the door! he will be here immediately. (*Shuts the door upon her, and continues to set the room in order.*)

Est. (*looking out again.*) La! Mariane, do you know how many yards of point Lady Squat has

got round her new — (Agnes *from behind, claps her hand on* Eston's *mouth, and draws her into the closet.* — Mariane *sets herself by the table, pretending to read.* Exit Betty, *and enter* Sir Loftus, *a servant announcing him.*)

Sir Loft. You are very studious this morning, Miss Withrington.

Mar. (*carelessly.*) Ha! how do you do?

Sir Loft. You have been well amus'd, I hope?

Mar. So, so. I must put in a mark here, and not lose my place. (*Looking on the table.*) There is no paper — O, there is some on the other table: pray do fetch it me! (*Pointing to a table at the bottom of the stage.*) I am very lazy. (*Sits down again indolently.*)

Sir Loft. (*fetching the paper, and presenting it with a condescending yet self-important air.*) I have the honour to obey you, Ma'am.

Mar. I thank you; you are a very serviceable creature, I am sure.

Sir Loft. (*drawing himself up proudly, but immediately correcting himself.*) I am always happy to serve Miss Withrington.

Mar. O! I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition. (*Tosses her arm upon the table and throws down a book.*) I am very stupid this morning. (Sir Loftus *picks up the book, and gives it to her rather sulkily; and she in receiving it drops an ivory ball under the table.*) Bless me! what is the matter with all these things? pray lift it for me, good Sir Loftus! I believe you must

creep under the table for it though. (*He stoops under the table with a very bad grace, and she slyly gives it a touch with her foot, which makes it run to the other side of the stage.*) Nay, you must go farther off for it now. I am very troublesome.

Sir Loft. (*goes after it rather unwillingly, and presenting it to her with still a worse grace,*) Madam, this is more honour than I — (*mumbling.*)

Mar. O, no! Sir Loftus, it is only you that are too good. (*Lolling carelessly in her chair.*) It is so comfortable to have such a good creature by one! your fine fashionable men are admired to be sure, but I don't know how, I feel always restrained in their company. With a good obliging creature like you now, I can be quite at my ease; I can just desire you to do any thing.

Sir Loft. Upon my honour, Madam, you flatter me very much indeed. Upon my honour, I must say, I am rather at a loss to conceive how I have merited these commendations.

Mar. O! Sir Loftus, you are too humble, too diffident of yourself. I know very well the obliging turn of your disposition to every body.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Damn it! is she an idiot? (*aloud.*) Your good opinion, Madam, does me a great deal of honour, but I assure you, Ma'am, it is more than I deserve. I have great pleasure in serving Miss Withrington; — to be at the service of every body is an extent of benevolence I by no means pretend to.

Mar. Now why are you so diffident, Sir Loftus?

Did not old Mrs. Mumblecake tell me the other day, how you ran nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve to rub her monkey's tail?

Sir Loft. She told you a damned lie then! (*Biting his lip, and walking up and down with hasty strides.*) Damn it! this is beyond all bearing! I run nine times to the apothecary's to fetch green salve for her monkey's tail! If the cursed hag says so again, I'll bury her alive!

Mar. Nay, don't be angry about it. I'm sure I thought it very good in you, and I said so to every body.

Sir Loft. You have been obliging enough to tell it to all the world too?

Mar. And why should I not have the pleasure of praising you?

Sir Loft. Hell and the devil! (*Turning on his heel, and striding up and down, and muttering as he goes, whilst she sits carelessly with her arms crossed.*)

Mar. My good Sir Loftus, you will tire yourself. Had you not better be seated?

Sir Loft. (*endeavouring to compose himself.*) The influence you have over me, Ma'am, gets the better of every thing. I would not have you mistake my character, however; if love engages me in your service, you ought so to receive it. I have been less profuse of these attentions to women of the very first rank and fashion; I might therefore have hoped that you would lend a more favourable ear to my passion.

Mar. Indeed you wrong me. You don't know

how favourably my ear may be disposed: sit down here and tell me all about it. (Sir Loftus *revolts again at her familiarity, but stifles his pride, and sits down by her.*)

Sir Loft. Permit me to say, Madam, that it is time we should come to an explanation of each other's sentiments.

Mar. Whenever you please, Sir.

Sir Loft. (*bowing.*) I hope then, I may be allowed to presume, that my particular attentions to you, pardon me, Ma'am, have not been altogether disagreeable to you.

Mar. O! not at all, Sir Loftus.

Sir Loft. (*bowing again.*) I will presume then still farther, Ma'am, and declare to you, that from the very day which gave birth to my passion, I have not ceased to think of you with the most ardent tenderness.

Mar. La! Sir Loftus, was it not of a Wednesday?

Sir Loft. (*fretted.*) Upon my word I am not so very accurate: it might be Wednesday, or Friday, or any day.

Mar. Of a Friday, do you think? it runs strangely in my head that we saw one another first of a Wednesday.

Sir Loft. (*very much fretted.*) I say, Ma'am, the day which gave birth to my love —

Mar. O! very true! you might see me first of a Wednesday, and yet not fall in love with me till the Friday. (Sir Loftus *starts up in a passion, and*

strides up and down. — Mariane *rising from her seat carelessly.*) I wonder where William has put the nuts I bought for Miss Eston's squirrel. I think I hear a mouse in the wainscot. (*Goes to the bottom of the room, and opens a small cabinet, whilst* Sir Loftus *comes forward to the front.*)

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Damn her freaks! I wish the devil had the wooing of her. (*Pauses.*) I must not lose her for a trifle though; but when she is once secured, I'll be revenged! I'll vex her! I'll drive the spirit out of her! (*Aloud, as she comes forward.*) My passion for you, Miss Withrington, is too generous and disinterested to merit this indifference.

Mar. I'm glad they have not eat the nuts though.

Sir Loft. (*aside.*) Curse her and her nuts! I'll tame her! (*aloud.*) My sentiments for you, Ma'am, are of so delicate and tender a nature, they do indeed deserve your indulgence. Tell me, then, can the most disinterested, the most fervent love, make any impression on your heart? I can no longer exist in this state of anxiety! at your feet let me implore you — (*Seems about to kneel, but rather unwillingly, as if he wished to be prevented.*)

Mar. Pray, Sir Loftus, don't kneel there! my maid has spilt oil on the floor.

Sir Loft. Since you will not permit me to have the pleasure of kneeling at —

Mar. Nay, I will not deprive you of the plea-

sure — There is no oil spilt here. (*Pointing to a part of the floor very near the closet door.*)

Sir Loft. I see it would be disagreeable to you.

Mar. I see very well you are not inclined to condescend so far.

Sir Loft. (*kneeling directly.*) Believe me, Madam, the pride, the pleasure of my life, is to be devoted to the most adorable — (Mariane *gives a significant cough, and* Agnes *and* Eston *burst from the closet: the door opening on the outside, comes against* Sir Loftus *as he kneels, and lays him sprawling on the floor.*)

Ag. Est. and Mar. (*speaking together.*) O Sir Loftus! poor Sir Loftus! (*All coming about him, pretending to assist him to get up.*)

Sir Loft. Damn their bawling! they will bring the whole family here!

Enter Mr. WITHRINGTON *and* OPAL: Sir Loftus, *mad with rage, makes a desperate effort, and gets upon his legs.* Opal *stands laughing at him without any ceremony, whilst he bites his lips, and draws himself up haughtily.*

Mar. (*to* Sir Loft.) I'm afraid you have hurt yourself?

Sir Loft. (*shortly.*) No, Ma'am.

Ag. Hav'nt you rubbed the skin off your shins, Sir Loftus?

Sir Loft. No, Ma'am.

Ag. I am sure he has hurt his nose, but he is ashamed to own it.

Sir Loft. Neither shin nor nose! Devil take it!

With. Get along, girls, and don't torment this poor man any longer. I am afraid, Sir Loftus, the young gipsies have been making a fool of you.

Sir Loft. Sir, it is neither in your power nor theirs to make a fool of me.

Op. Ha, ha, ha, ha! 'Faith, Prettyman, you must forgive me! ha, ha, ha, ha! I never thought in my life to have caught you at such low prostrations. But don't be so angry, though you do make a confounded silly figure, it must be confessed. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Sir Loft. (*to* Op.) Sir, your impertinence and yourself are equally contemptible: and I desire you would no longer take the trouble of intruding yourself into my company, nor of affronting me, as you have hitherto done, with your awkward imitation of my figure and address.

Op. What the devil do you mean? I imitate your figure and address! I scorn to — I will not deny that I may have insensibly acquired a little of them both, for — for — (*Hesitating.*)

Ag. For he has observed people laughing at him of late.

Sir Loft. (*turning on his heel.*) He is beneath my resentment.

Mar. Be not so angry, good Sir Loftus! let us end this business for the present; and when I am at leisure to hear the remainder of your declar-

ations, which have been so unfortunately interrupted, I'll send and let you know.

Sir Loft. No, 'faith, Madam! you have heard the last words I shall ever say to you upon the subject. A large fortune may make amends for an ordinary person, Madam, but not for vulgarity and impertinence. Good morning! (*Breaks from them, and* EXIT, *leaving them laughing provokingly behind him.*)

With. (*shaking his head.*) This is too bad, this is too bad, young ladies! I am ashamed to have all this rioting and absurdity going on in my house.

Ag. Come away, uncle, and see him go down the back walk, from the parlour windows. I'll warrant you he'll stride it away most nobly. (Withrington *follows, shrugging up his shoulders.*)

[EXEUNT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — Mr. WITHRINGTON's *Library.* Mr. WITHRINGTON *discovered seated by a table.*

With. Who waits there? (*Enter* SERVANT.) Tell Miss Agnes Withrington I wish to see her. [*Exit* SERVANT.] What an absurd fellow this Harwood is, to be so completely bewitched with such a girl as Agnes! If she were like the women I

remember, there would indeed be some—(Agnes *entering softly behind him, gives him a tap on the shoulder.*)

Ag. Well, uncle, what are you grumbling about? Have you lost your wager? Harwood has just left you, I hear.

With. I believe you may buy those trinkum trankum ornaments for Mariane whenever you please.

Ag. Pray look not so ungraciously upon the matter! But you can't forgive him, I suppose, for being such a ninny as to fall in love with a little ordinary girl, eh?

With. And so he is a ninny, and a fool, and a very silly fellow.

Ag. Do tell me what he has been saying to you.

With. Why, he confesses thou art ill-tempered, that thou art freakish, that thou art extravagant; and that of all the friends he has spoken with upon the subject, there is not one who will allow thee beauty enough to make a good-looking dairy-maid.

Ag. Did he say so!

With. Why, something nearly equivalent to it, Agnes. Yet, notwithstanding all this, there is something about thee, so unaccountably delightful to him, that, poor as thou art, he will give up the fair hopes of opulence, and the pleasures of freedom, to watch for thee, bear with thee, drudge for thee, if thou wilt have the condescen-

sion, in return, to plague and torment him for life.

Ag. Foolish enough indeed! yet heaven bless him for it! What a fortunate woman am I! I sought a disinterested lover, and I have found a most wonderful one.

With. I dare say you think yourself very fortunate.

Ag. And don't you, likewise, my good Sir? but you seem displeased at it.

With. You guess rightly enough: I must speak without disguise, Agnes; I am not pleased.

Ag. Ah! his want of fortune —

With. Poo! you know very well I despise all mercenary balancing of property. It is not that which disturbs me. To be the disinterested choice of a worthy man is what every woman, who means to marry at all, would be ambitious of; and a point in regard to her marriage, which a woman of fortune would be unwilling to leave doubtful. But there are men whose passions are of such a violent overbearing nature, that love in them, may be considered as a disease of the mind; and the object of it claims no more perfection or pre-eminence amongst women, than chalk, lime, or oatmeal do amongst dainties, because some diseased stomachs do prefer them to all things. Such men as these we sometimes see attach themselves even to ugliness and infamy, in defiance of honour and decency. With such men as these, women of sense and refinement can never be happy; nay,

to be willingly the object of their love is disrespectable. (*Pauses.*) But you don't care for all this, I suppose? It does well enough for an old uncle to perplex himself with these niceties: it is you yourself the dear man happens to love, and none of those naughty women I have been talking of, so all is very right. (*Pauses, and she seems thoughtful.*)

Ag. (*assuming a grave and more dignified air.*) No, Sir, you injure me: prove that his love for me is stronger than his love of virtue, and I will—

With. What will you do, Agnes?

Ag. I will give him up for ever.

With. Ay, there spoke a brave girl! you deserve the best husband in Christendom for this.

Ag. Nay, if Harwood endures not the test, I will indeed renounce him, but no other man shall ever fill his place.

With. Well, well, we shall see, we shall see. (*Walks up and down. She is thoughtful.*) You are very thoughtful, Agnes! I fear I have distressed you.

Ag. You have distressed me, yet I thank you for it. I have been too presumptuous, I have ventured farther than I ought. Since it is so, I will not shrink from the trial. (*Pauses.*) Don't you think he will go through it honourably?

With. (*shaking his head.*) Indeed I know not—I hope he will.

Ag. You hope? I thank you for that word, my

dear Sir! I hope he will too. (*She remains thoughtful: he takes a turn or two across the stage.*)

With. (*clapping her shoulder affectionately.*) What are you thinking of, niece?

Ag. How to set about this business.

With. And how will you do it?

Ag. I will write a letter to Lady Fade, asking pardon for having told some malicious falsehoods of her, to a relation on whom she is dependant; begging she will make up the matter, and forgive me, promising at the same time, most humbly, if she will not expose me for this time, never to offend so any more. Next time he comes I will make him direct the letter himself, that when it falls into his hands again, he may have no doubt of its authenticity. Will this do?

With. Yes, very well. If he loves you after this, his love is not worth the having.

Ag. Ah, uncle! You are very hard hearted! But you are very right: I know you are very right. Pray does not Royston lodge in the same house with Harwood?

With. He does.

Ag. I wish, by his means, we could conceal ourselves somewhere in his apartments, where we might see Harwood have the letter put into his hands, and observe his behaviour. I don't know any body else who can do this for us: doyou think you could put him into good humour again?

With. I rather think I can, for he hath still a favour to ask of me.

Ag. We must give him a part to act; do you think he can do it?

With. He is a very blundering fellow, but he will be so flattered with being let into the secret, that I know he will do his best.

Enter MARIANE.

Mar. What have you been about so long together?

With. Hatching a new plot; and we set about it directly too.

Mar. I am very sure the plot is of your own hatching, then; for I never saw Agnes with any thing of this kind in her head, wear such a grave spiritless face upon it before.

With. You are mistaken, Ma'am, it is of her own contrivance; but you shall know nothing about it. And I give you warning that this shall be the last of them: if you have got any more poor devils on your hands to torment, do it quickly; for I will have an end put to all this foolery.

Mar. Very well, uncle; I have just been following your advice. I have discarded Sir Ulock O'Grady, and I have only now poor Opal to reward for his services. I have got a promise of marriage from him, in which he forfeits ten thousand pounds if he draws back. I shall torment him with this a little. It was an extraordinary thing to be sure for an heiress to demand: but I told him it was the fashion; and now that he has

bound himself so securely, he is quite at heart's ease, and thinks every thing snug and well settled.

Enter ROYSTON, *a Servant announcing him.*

With. Your servant, Mr. Royston, I am very glad to see you. Don't start at seeing the ladies with me; I know my niece, Mariane, and you have had a little misunderstanding, but when I have explained the matter to you, you will be friends with her again, and laugh at it yourself.

Roy. (*coldly.*) I have the honour to wish the ladies good morning.

With. Nay, cousin, you don't understand how it is: these girls have been playing tricks upon every man they have met with since they came here; and when that wild creature (*pointing to* Mariane,) was only laughing at the cheat she had passed upon them all, which I shall explain to you presently, you thought she was laughing at you. Shake hands, and be friends with her, cousin; nobody minds what a foolish girl does.

Roy. (*his face brightening up.*) O! for that matter, I mind these things as little as any body, cousin Withrington, I have too many affairs of importance on my hands, to attend to such little matters as these. I am glad the young lady had a hearty laugh with all my soul; and I shall be happy to see her as merry again whenever she has a mind to it. I mind it! no, no, no!

Mar. I thank you, Sir; and I hope we shall be

merry again, when you shall have your own share of the joke.

Roy. Yes, yes, we shall be very merry. By the-bye, Withrington, I came here to tell you, that I have got my business with the duke put into so good a train, that it can hardly misgive.

With. I am happy to hear it.

Roy. You must know I have set very artfully about it, cousin; but I dare say you would guess as much, he, he, he! You knew me of old, eh! I have got Mr. Cullyfool to ask it for me on his own account; I have bribed an old house-keeper, who is to interest a great lady in my favour; I have called eleven times on his grace's half-cousin, till she has fairly promised to write to the dutchess upon the business: I have written to the steward, and promised his son all my interest at next election, if he has any mind to stand for our borough, you know; and I have applied by a friend — no, no, he has applied through the medium of another friend, or rather, I believe, by that friend's wife, or aunt, or some way or other, I don't exactly remember, but it is a very good channel, I know.

With. O! I make no doubt of it.

Roy. Nay, my landlady has engaged her apothecary's wife to speak to his grace's physician about it; and a medical man, you know, sometimes asks a favour with great advantage, when a patient believes that his life is in his hands. The duke has got a most furious fit of the gout, and it

has been in his stomach too, ha, ha, ha, ha! — If we can't succeed without it, I have a friend who will offer a round sum for me, at last; but I hope this will not be necessary. Pray, do you know of any other good channel to solicit by?

With. 'Faith, Royston! you have found out too many roads to one place already: I fear you'll lose your way amongst them all.

Roy. Nay, nay, cousin, I won't be put off so. I have been told this morning you are acquainted with Sucksop, the duke's greatest friend and adviser. Come, come! you must use your interest for me.

With. Well, then, come into the other room, and we shall speak about it. I have a favour to ask of you too.

Roy. My dear Sir, any favour in my power you may absolutely command at all times. I'll follow you, cousin. (*Goes to the door with* Withrington *with great alacrity, but recollecting that he has forgotten to pay his compliments to the ladies, hurries back again, and, after making several very profound bows to them, follows* Withrington *into another room.*)

Mar. (*imitating him.*) Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ag. Softly, Mariane; let us leave this room, if you must laugh, for he will overhear you.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

ROYSTON's *Lodgings: enter* ROYSTON, *conducting in* AGNES, MARIANE, *and* WITHRINGTON.

Roy. Now, pray compose yourselves, young ladies, and sit down a little. I'll manage every thing: don't give yourselves any trouble; I'll set the whole plot a-going.

With. We depend entirely upon you, Royston.

Roy. I know you do: many a one depends upon me, cousin Withrington. I'll shew you how I'll manage it. Jonathan, come here, Jonathan! (*Enter* Jonathan.) Bring me that screen from the other room. (*Exit* Jonathan.) We'll place it here, if you please, cousin, and then you and the ladies can stand as snugly behind it, as kings and queens in a puppet-show, till your time comes to appear. (*Enter* Jonathan *with screen.*) Come hither with it, Jonathan: place it here. (*Pointing.*) No, no, jolter-head, nearer the wall with it. (*Going behind it, and coming out again.*) It will do better a little more to this side, for then it will be farther from the window.

Ag. O! it will do very well, Sir; you take too much trouble.

Roy. Trouble, my dear Ma'am! If it were a hundred times more trouble, I should be happy to serve you. I don't mind trouble, if I can get the thing done cleverly and completely. That's

my way of doing things. No, it don't stand to please me yet; it is too near the door now, and the ladies may catch cold, perhaps.

Ag. (*very uneasy.*) Indeed, it stands very well! Harwood will be here before we are ready.

Roy. (*to* Jon.) Blockhead that thou art! can'st thou not set it up even? Now, that will do, (*Getting behind it.*) This will do. (*Coming out again.*) Yes, this will do to a nicety.

Mar. (*aside.*) Heaven be praised, this grand matter is settled at last!

Roy. Now, he'll think it odd, perhaps, that I have a screen in my room; but I have a trick for that, ladies; I'll tell him I mean to purchase lands in Canada, and have been looking over the map of America. (Agnes *looks to* Withrington *very uneasy.*)

With. Don't do that, Royston, for then he will examine the screen.

Roy. Or I may say, there is a chink in the wall, and I placed it to keep out the air.

Ag. No, no, that won't do. For heaven's sake, Sir!

Roy. Then I shall just say, I like to have a screen in my room, for I am used to it at home.

Mar. Bless me, Mr. Royston! can't you just leave it alone, and he'll take no notice of it.

Roy. O! if he takes no notice of it, that is a different thing, Miss Withrington: but don't be uneasy, I'll manage it all; I'll conduct the whole business.

Ag. (*aside to* Withrington.) O! my good Sir! this fool will ruin every thing.

With. Be quiet, Agnes, we are in for it now.

Roy. Let me remember my lesson too. Here is the letter for him, with the seal as naturally broken, as if the lady had done it herself. Harwood will wonder, now, how I came to know about all this. 'Faith! I believe, he thinks me a strange, diving, penetrating kind of a genius, already, and he is not far wrong, perhaps. You know me, cousin Withrington: ha, ha, ha, ha! You know me.

Ag. O! I wish it were over, and we were out of this house again!

Roy. Don't be uneasy, Ma'am, I'll manage every thing. — Jonathan! (*Enter* Jonathan,) don't you go and tell Mr. Harwood that I have got company here.

Jon. No, no, your honour, I knows better than that; for the ladies are to be behind the screen, Sir, and he must know nothing of the matter, to be sure. I'ficken! it will be rare sport!

Ag. (*starting.*) I hear a knock at the door.

Roy. It is him, I dare say; run, Jonathan.

[Exit Jonathan.

Ag. Come, come, let us hide ourselves. (*All get behind the screen but* Royston.)

Roy. Ay, ay, it will do very well. (*Looking at the screen.*)

Ag. (*behind.*) Mariane, don't breathe so loud.

Mar. (*behind.*) I don't breathe loud.

Ag. (*behind.*) Do, uncle, draw in the edge of your coat.

With. (*behind.*) Poo, silly girl! they can't see a bit of it.

Enter Colonel HARDY *and* HARWOOD.

Roy. Ha! your servant, my dear Colonel. How goes it, Harwood? I bade my man tell you I was alone, and very much disposed for your good company; but I am doubly fortunate. (*Bowing to the* Colonel.)

Col. Indeed, Royston, I have been pretty much with him these two days past, and I don't believe he gives me great thanks for my company. I am like an old horse running after a colt; the young devil never fails to turn now and then, and give him a kick for his pains.

Har. Nay, my good friend, I must be an ass's colt, then. I am sure, I mean it not; but I am not happy, and fear I have been peevish with you.

Roy. (*attempting to look archly.*) Peevish, and all that! perhaps the young man is in love, Colonel?

Col. No more, if you please, Royston: we are to speak of this no more.

Enter JONATHAN.

Jon. Did your honour call?

Roy. No, sirrah. (Jonathan *goes, as if he were*

looking for something, and takes a sly peep behind the screen, to see if they are all there.) What are you peeping there for? get along, you hound! Does he want to make people believe I keep rary-shows behind the wainscot? (EXIT Jonathan.) But as I was a-saying, Colonel, perhaps the young man is in love. He, he, he!

Col. No, no, let us have no more of it.

Roy. But 'faith, I know that he is so! and I know the lady too. She is a cousin of my own, and I am as well acquainted with her as I am with my own dog — But you don't ask me what kind of a girl she is. (*To the* Colonel.)

Col. Give over now, Royston; she is a very good girl, I dare say.

Roy. Well, you may think so, but — (*Making significant faces.*) But — I should not say all I know of my own cousin, to be sure, but —

Har. What are all those cursed grimaces for? Her faults are plain and open as her perfections: these she disdains to conceal, and the others it is impossible.

Roy. Softly, Harwood; don't be in a passion, unless you would imitate your mistress; for she has not the gentlest temper in the world.

Har. Well, well, I love her the better for it. I can't bear your insipid passionless women; I would as soon live upon sweet curd all my life, as attach myself to one of them.

Roy. She is very extravagant.

Har. Heaven bless the good folks! would they

have a man to give up the woman of his heart, because she likes a bit of lace upon her petticoat?

Roy. Well, but she is —

Col. Devil take you, Royston! can't you hold your tongue about her? you see he can't bear it.

Roy. (*making signs to the* Colonel.) Let me alone; I know when to speak, and when to hold my tongue, as well as another. Indeed, Harwood, I am your friend; and though the lady is my relation, I must say, I wish you had made a better choice. I have discovered something in regard to her this morning, which shews her to be a very improper one. I cannot say, however, that I have discovered any thing which surprised me; I know her too well.

Har. (*vehemently.*) You are imposed upon by some damn'd falsehood.

Roy. But I have proof of what I say; the lady who is injured by her gave me this letter to shew to Mr. Withrington. (*Taking out the letter.*)

Har. It is some fiend who wants to undermine her, and has forged that scrawl to serve her spiteful purpose.

Roy. I should be glad it were so, my dear friend; but Lady Fade is a woman, whose veracity has never been suspected.

Har. Is it from Lady Fade? Give it me! (*Snatching the letter.*)

Roy. It is Agnes's hand, is it not?

Har. It is, at least, a good imitation of it.

Roy. Read the contents, pray!

Har. "Madam, what I have said to the prejudice of your ladyship's character to your relation, Mr. Worthy, I am heartily sorry for; and I am ready to beg pardon on my knees, if you desire it; to acknowledge before Mr. Worthy himself, that it is a falsehood, or make any other reparation, in a private way, that you may desire. Let me, then, conjure your ladyship not to expose me, and I shall ever remain your most penitent and grateful A. Withrington."

Roy. The lady would not be so easily pacified, though; for she blackened her character, in order to make her best friend upon earth quarrel with her; so she gave me the letter to shew to her uncle. Is it forged, think you?

Har. It is possible—I will venture to say—Nay, I am sure it is!

Roy. If it is, there is one circumstance which may help to discover the author; it is directed by a different hand on the back. Look at it.

Har. (*In great perturbation.*) Is it? (*Turns hastily the folds of the letter, but his hand trembles so much, he can't find the back.*)

Col. My dear Harwood! this is the back of the letter, and methinks the writing is somewhat like your own. (Harwood *looks at it; then staggering back, throws himself into a chair, which happens to be behind him, and covers his upper face with his hand.*)

Col. My dear Harwood!

Roy. See how his lips quiver, and his bosom

heaves! Let us unbutton him; I fear he is going into a fit. (Agnes *comes from behind the screen in a fright, and* Withrington *pulls her in again.*)

Col. (*with great tenderness.*) My dear Harwood!

Har. (*with a broken voice.*) I'll go to mine own chamber. (*Gets up hastily from his chair, and then falls back again in a faint.*)

Col. He has fainted.

Roy. Help, help, here! (*Running about.*) Who has got hartshorn, or lavender, or water? help here! (*They all come from behind the screen.* Agnes *runs to* Harwood, *and sprinkles him over with lavender, rubbing his temples, &c., whilst* Colonel Hardy *stares at them all in amazement.*)

Ag. Alas! we have carried this too far! Harwood! my dear Harwood!

Col. (*to* Roy.) What is all this?

Roy. I thought we should amaze you. I knew I should manage it.

Col. You have managed finely indeed, to put Harwood into such a state with your mummery,

Ag. Will he not come to himself again? Get some water, Mariane—See how pale he is! (*He recovers.*) O! he recovers! Harwood! do you know me, Harwood?

Har. (*looking upon* Agnes, *and shrinking back from her.*) Ha! what has brought you here? leave me! leave me! I am wretched enough already.

Ag. I come to bring you relief, my dear Harwood.

Har. No, madam, it is misery you bring. We must part for ever.

Ag. O! uncle! do you hear that? He says we must part for ever.

With. (*taking hold of* Agnes.) Don't be in such a hurry about it.

Har. (*rising up.*) How came you here? (*to* Withrington,) and these ladies?

Roy. O! it was all my contrivance.

With. Pray now, Royston, be quiet a little.—Mr. Harwood, I will speak to you seriously. I see you are attached to my niece, and I confess she has many faults; but you are a man of sense, and with you she will make a more respectable figure in the world than with any other; I am anxious for her welfare, and if you will marry her, I will give her such a fortune as will make it no longer an imprudent step to follow your inclinations.

Har. No, Sir, you shall keep your fortune and your too bewitching niece together. For her sake I would have renounced all ambition; I would have shared with her poverty and neglect; I would have borne with all her faults and weaknesses of nature; I would have toiled, I would have bled for her; but I can never yoke myself with unworthiness.

Ag. (*wiping her eyes, and giving two skips upon the floor.*) O! admirable! admirable! speak to him, uncle! tell him all, my dear uncle! for I can't say a word.

Col. (*aside to* Royston.) Isn't she a little wrong in the head, Royston?

With. Give me your hand, Harwood: you are a noble fellow, and you shall marry this little girl of mine after all. This story of the letter and Lady Fade, was only a concerted one amongst us, to prove what mettle you are made of. Agnes, to try your love, affected to be shrewish and extravagant; and afterwards, at my suggestion, to try your principles, contrived this little plot, which has just now been unravelled; but I do assure you, on the word of an honest man, there is not a better girl in the kingdom. I must own, however, she is a fanciful little toad. (Harwood *runs to* Agnes, *catches her in his arms, and runs two or three times round with her, then takes her hand and kisses it, and then puts his knee to the ground.*)

Har. My charming, my delightful Agnes! Oh! what a fool have I been! how could I suppose it?

Ag. We took some pains with you, and it would have been hard, if we could not have deceived you amongst us all.

Har. And so thou art a good girl, a very good girl. I know thou art. I'll be hang'd if thou hast one fault in the world.

With. No, no, Harwood, not quite so perfect. I can prove her still to be an arrant cheat; for she pretended to be careless of you when she thought of you all the day long; and she pretended to be poor with an hundred thousand pounds, indepen-

dant of any one, in her possession. She is Miss Withrington the heiress; and this lady, (*pointing to* Mariane,) has only been her representative for a time, for reasons which I shall explain to you by-and-by. (Harwood *lets go* Agnes's *hand, and steps back some paces with a certain gravity and distance in his air.*)

With. What is the matter now, Harwood? does this cast a damp upon you?

Roy. It is a weighty distress truly. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Col. By heaven this is good.

Ag. (*going up to* Harwood, *and holding out her hand.*) Do not look so distantly upon me, Harwood: you was willing to marry me as a poor woman; if there is any thing in my fortune which offends you, I scatter it to the winds.

Har. My admirable girl! it is astonishment, it is something I cannot express, which overcomes, I had almost said distresses me, at present. (*Presenting her to the* Colonel.) Colonel Hardy, this is the woman I have raved about! this is the woman I have boasted of! this is my Agnes! and this, Miss Withrington, is Colonel Hardy, my own, and my father's friend.

Ag. (*holding out her hand to the* Colonel.) He shall be mine too. Every friend of yours shall be my friend, Harwood; but the friend to your father my most respected one.

Har. Do you hear that, Colonel?

Col. I hear it; my heart hears it, and blesses you both.

Har. (*to* With.) My dear Sir, what shall I say to you for all this goodness?

Ag. Tell him he is the dearest good uncle on earth, and we will love him all our lives for it. Yes, indeed, we will, uncle, (*taking his hand,*) very, very dearly!

Roy. Now, good folks, have not I managed it cleverly?

Mar. Pray let me come from the back ground a little; and since I must quit all the splendour of heiresship, I desire, at least, that I may have some respect paid me for having filled the situation so well, as the old Mayor receives the thanks of the corporation, when the new Mayor—Bless me! here comes Opal! I have not quite done with it yet.

With. Your servant, Mr. Opal.

Mar. (*to* Op.) Are you not surprised to find us all here?

Op. Harwood I know is a very lucky fellow, but I knew you were here. It is impossible, you see, to escape me, But (*half aside to* Mariane.) I wanted to tell you Colonel Beaumont is come to Bath. Now I should like to be introduced to him on his arrival. He will be very much the fashion, I dare say, and I should like to have a friendship for him. You understand me? You can procure this for me, I know.

With. Come, Mr. Opal, you must join in our good humour here, for we have just been making up a match. My niece, Agnes, with a large fortune, bestows herself on a worthy man, who

would have married her without one; and Mariane, who for certain reasons has assumed her character of heiress since we came to Bath, leaves all her borrowed state, in hopes that the man who would have married her with a fortune, will not now forsake her.

Op. (*stammering.*) Wh—Wh—What is all this?

Roy. (*half aside to* Opal.) You seem disturbed, Mr. Opal; you have not been paying your addresses to her, I hope.

Op. (*aside to* Royston.) No, not paying my addresses; that is to say, not absolutely. I have paid her some attention to be sure.

Roy. (*nodding significantly.*) It is well for you it is no worse.

Mar. (*turning to* Opal, *who looks very much frightened.*) What is it you say? Don't you think I overheard it? Not paid your addresses to me! O! you false man! can you deny the declarations you have made? the oaths you have sworn? O! you false man!

Op. Upon honour, Madam, we men of the world don't expect to be called to an account for every foolish thing we say.

Mar. What you have written then shall witness against you. Will you deny this promise of marriage in your own hand-writing? (*Taking out a paper.*)

Roy. (*aside to* Op.) What! a promise of marriage, Mr. Opal! The devil himself could not

have put it into your head to do a worse thing than this.

Op. (*very frightened, but making a great exertion.*) Don't think, Ma'am, to bully me into the match. I can prove that promise to be given to you under the false character of an heiress, therefore your deceit loosens the obligation.

With. Take care what you say, Sir; (*to* Op.) I will not see my niece wronged. The law shall do her justice, whatever expence it may cost me.

Mar. Being an heiress, or not, has nothing to do in the matter, Mr. Opal; for you expressly say in this promise, that my beauty and perfections alone have induced you to engage yourself; and I will take all the men in court to witness, whether I am not as handsome to-day as I was yesterday.

Op. I protest there is not such a word in the paper.

Mar. (*holding out the paper.*) O base man! will you deny your own writing? (Op. *snatches the paper from her, tears it to pieces.*)

Mar. (*gathering up the scattered pieces.*) O! I can put them together again. (Op. *snatching up one of the pieces, crams it into his mouth and chews it.*)

Roy. Chew fast, Opal! she will snatch it out of your mouth else. There is another bit for you. (*Offering him another piece.*)

Mar. (*bursting into a loud laugh, in which all the company join.*) Is it very nice, Mr. Opal? You

munch it up as expeditiously as a bit of plum-cake.

Op. What the deuce does all this mean?

With. This naughty girl, Mr. Opal, has only been amusing herself with your promise, which she never meant to make any other use of; she is already engaged to a very worthy young man, who will receive with her a fortune by no means contemptible.

Op. Well, well, much good may it do him: what do I care about — (*mumbling to himself.*)

Roy. Ha, ha, ha! how some people do get themselves into scrapes! They have no more notion of managing their affairs than so many sheep. Ha, ha, ha!

Enter HUMPHRY.

Humph. (*to* Roy.) I would speak a word with your honour. (*Whispers to* Royston.)

Roy. (*in a rage.*) What! given away the place! It is impossible! It is some wicked machination! It is some damn'd trick!

With. Be moderate, Royston; what has good Mr. Humphry been telling you?

Roy. O! the devil of a bite! his Grace has given away the place to a poor simpleton, who had never a soul to speak for him!

With. Who told you this, Mr Humphry?

Humph. Truly, Sir, I called upon his Grace's gentleman, just to make up a kind of acquaintance

with him, as his honour desired me, and he told me it was given away this morning.

Roy. What cursed luck!

Humph. "Why," says I, "I thought my master was to have had it, Mr. Smoothly." "And so he would," says he, "but one person came to the Duke after another, teasing him about Mr. Royston, till he grew quite impatient; for there was but one of all those friends," says he, winking with his eye so, "who did speak at last to the purpose; but then, upon Mr. Sucksop's taking up your master's interest, he shrunk back from his word, which offended his Grace very much,"

Roy. Blundering blockhead!

Humph. And so he gave away the place directly to poor Mr. Drudgewell, who had no recommendation at all, but fifteen years' hard service in the office.

Roy. Well, now! well, now! you see how the world goes; simpletons and idiots carry every thing before them.

With. Nay, Royston, blame yourself too. Did not I tell you, you had found out too many roads to one place, and would lose your way amongst them?

Roy. No, no, it is all that cursed perverse fate of mine! By the Lord, half the trouble I have taken for this paltry office, would have procured some people an archbishoprick! There is Harwood, now, fortune presses herself upon him, and makes him, at one stroke, an idle gentleman for life.

Har. No, Sir, an idle gentleman I will never be: my Agnes shall never be the wife of any thing so contemptible.

Ag. I thank you, Harwood; I do, indeed, look for honourable distinction in being your wife. You shall still exert your powers in the profession you have chosen: you shall be the weak one's stay, the poor man's advocate; you shall gain fair fame in recompense, and that will be our nobility.

With. Well said, my children! you have more sense than I thought you had amongst all these whimsies. Now, let us take our leave of plots and story-telling, if you please, and all go to my house to supper. Royston shall drown his disappointment in a can of warm negus, and Mr. Opal shall have something more palatable than his last spare morsel. [EXEUNT.

THE END OF THE TRYAL.

DE MONFORT:

A TRAGEDY.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

MEN:

De Monfort.
Rezenvelt.
Count Freberg, *Friend to* De Monfort *and* Rezenvelt.
Manuel, *Servant to* De Monfort.
Jerome, De Monfort's *old Landlord.*
Conrad, *an artful Knave.*
Bernard, *a Monk.*

Monks, Gentlemen, Officers, Page, *&c. &c.*

WOMEN:

Jane De Monfort, *Sister to* De Monfort.
Countess Freberg, *Wife to* Freberg.
Theresa, *Servant to the* Countess.

Abbess, Nuns, *and a* Lay Sister, Ladies, *&c.*

Scene, a Town in Germany.

DE MONFORT.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — JEROME's *House. A large old-fashioned chamber.*

Jer. (*speaking without.*) This way, good masters.

Enter JEROME, *bearing a light, and followed by* MANUEL, *and servants carrying luggage.*

Rest your burthens here.
This spacious room will please the Marquis best.
He takes me unawares; but ill prepar'd:
If he had sent, e'en tho' a hasty notice,
I had been glad.

Man. Be not disturb'd, good Jerome;
Thy house is in most admirable order;
And they who travel o' cold winter nights
Think homeliest quarters good.

Jer. He is not far behind?

Man. A little way.
(*To the Servants.*) Go you and wait below till he arrives.

Jer. (*shaking* Manuel *by the hand.*) Indeed, my friend, I'm glad to see you here.
Yet marvel wherefore.

Man. I marvel wherefore too, my honest Jerome:
But here we are; pri'thee be kind to us.
Jer. Most heartily I will. I love your master:
He is a quiet and a lib'ral man:
A better inmate never cross'd my door.
Man. Ah! but he is not now the man he was.
Lib'ral he'll be. God grant he may be quiet.
Jer. What has befallen him?
Man. I cannot tell thee;
But, faith, there is no living with him now.
Jer. And yet, methinks, if I remember well,
You were about to quit his service, Manuel,
When last he left this house. You grumbled then.
Man. I've been upon the eve of leaving him
These ten long years; for many times is he
So difficult, capricious, and distrustful,
He galls my nature — yet, I know not how,
A secret kindness binds me to him still.
Jer. Some, who offend from a suspicious nature,
Will afterward such fair confession make
As turns e'en the offence into a favour.
Man. Yes, some indeed do so; so will not he:
He'd rather die than such confession make.
Jer. Ay, thou art right; for now I call to mind
That once he wrong'd me with unjust suspicion,
When first he came to lodge beneath my roof;
And when it so fell out that I was prov'd
Most guiltless of the fault, I truly thought
He would have made profession of regret.

But silent, haughty, and ungraciously
He bore himself as one offended still.
Yet shortly after, when unwittingly
I did him some slight service, o'the sudden
He overpower'd me with his grateful thanks;
And would not be restrain'd from pressing on me
A noble recompense. I understood
His o'erstrain'd gratitude and bounty well,
And took it as he meant.

Man. 'Tis often thus.
I would have left him many years ago,
But that with all his faults there sometimes come
Such bursts of natural goodness from his heart,
As might engage a harder churl than me
To serve him still. — And then his sister too;
A noble dame, who should have been a queen:
The meanest of her hinds, at her command,
Had fought like lions for her, and the poor,
E'en o'er their bread of poverty, had bless'd her—
She would have griev'd if I had left my Lord.

Jer. Comes she along with him?

Man. No, he departed all unknown to her,
Meaning to keep conceal'd his secret route;
But well I knew it would afflict her much,
And therefore left a little nameless billet,
Which after our departure, as I guess,
Would fall into her hands, and tell her all.
What could I do? O 'tis a noble lady!

Jer. All this is strange — something disturbs his mind —
Belike he is in love.

Man. No, Jerome, no.
Once on a time I serv'd a noble master,
Whose youth was blasted with untoward love,
And he with hope and fear and jealousy
For ever toss'd, led an unquiet life:
Yet, when unruffled by the passing fit,
His pale wan face such gentle sadness wore
As mov'd a kindly heart to pity him.
But Monfort, even in his calmest hour,
Still bears that gloomy sternness in his eye
Which powerfully repels all sympathy.
O no! good Jerome, no, it is not love.

Jer. Hear I not horses trampling at the gate?
(*Listening.*)
He is arrived — stay thou — I had forgot —
A plague upon't! my head is so confus'd —
I will return i'the instant to receive him.
(EXIT *hastily.*)

(*A great bustle without.* EXIT Manuel *with lights, and returns again, lighting in* DE MONFORT, *as if just alighted from his journey.*)

Man. Your ancient host, my Lord, receives you gladly,
And your apartment will be soon prepar'd.

De Mon. 'Tis well.

Man. Where shall I place the chest you gave in charge?
So please you, say my Lord.

De Mon. (*throwing himself into a chair.*) Where-e'er thou wilt.

Man. I would not move that luggage till you came. (*Pointing to certain things.*)

De Mon. Move what thou wilt, and trouble me no more.

(Manuel, *with the assistance of other servants, sets about putting the things in order, and* De Monfort *remains sitting in a thoughtful posture.*)

Enter JEROME, *bearing wine, &c. on a salver. As he approaches* De Monfort, Manuel *pulls him by the sleeve.*

Man. (*aside to* Jerome.) No, do not now; he will not be disturb'd.

Jer. What! not to bid him welcome to my house,
And offer some refreshment?

Man. No, good Jerome.
Softly a little while: I pri'thee do.

Jerome *walks softly on tiptoes, till he gets behind* De Monfort, *then peeping on one side to see his face.*)

Jer. (*aside to* Manuel.) Ah, Manuel, what an alter'd man is here!
His eyes are hollow, and his cheeks are pale —
He left this house a comely gentleman.

De Mon. Who whispers there?

Man. 'Tis your old landlord, Sir.

Jer. I joy to see you here — I crave your pardon —
I fear I do intrude —

De Mon. No, my kind host, I am obliged to thee.

Jer. How fares it with your honour?

De Mon. Well enough.

Jer. Here is a little of the fav'rite wine
That you were wont to praise. Pray honour me.
(*Fills a glass.*)

De Mon. (*after drinking.*) I thank you, Jerome, 'tis delicious.

Jer. Ay, my dear wife did ever make it so.

De Mon. And how does she?

Jer. Alas, my Lord! she's dead.

De Mon. Well, then she is at rest.

Jer. How well, my Lord?

De Mon. Is she not with the dead, the quiet dead,
Where all is peace? Not e'en the impious wretch,
Who tears the coffin from its earthy vault,
And strews the mould'ring ashes to the wind,
Can break their rest.

Jer. Woe's me! I thought you would have grieved for her.
She was a kindly soul! Before she died,
When pining sickness bent her cheerless head,
She set my house in order —
And but the morning ere she breath'd her last,
Bade me preserve some flaskets of this wine,
That should the Lord de Monfort come again
His cup might sparkle still. (De Monfort *walks across the stage, and wipes his eyes.*)
Indeed I fear I have distress'd you, Sir;

I surely thought you would be grieved for her.

De Mon. (*taking* Jerome's *hand.*) I am, my friend. How long has she been dead?

Jer. Two sad long years.

De Mon. Would she were living still!
I was too troublesome, too heedless of her.

Jer. O no! she lov'd to serve you.

(*Loud knocking without.*)

De Mon. What fool comes here, at such untimely hours,
To make this cursed noise? (*To* Manuel.) Go to the gate. (EXIT Manuel.)
All sober citizens are gone to bed;
It is some drunkards on their nightly rounds,
Who mean it but in sport.

Jer. I hear unusual voices — here they come.

Re-enter MANUEL, *shewing in Count* FREBERG *and his* LADY, *with a mask in her hand.*

Freb. (*running to embrace* De Mon.) My dearest Monfort! most unlook'd for pleasure!
Do I indeed embrace thee here again?
I saw thy servant standing by the gate,
His face recall'd, and learnt the joyful tidings!
Welcome, thrice welcome here!

De Mon. I thank thee, Freberg, for this friendly visit,
And this fair Lady too. (*Bowing to the Lady.*)

Lady. I fear, my Lord,
We do intrude at an untimely hour:

But now, returning from a midnight mask,
My husband did insist that we should enter.
Freb. No, say not so; no hour untimely call,
Which doth together bring long absent friends.
Dear Monfort, why hast thou so slyly play'd,
To come upon us thus so suddenly?
De Mon. O! many varied thoughts do cross our brain,
Which touch the will, but leave the memory trackless;
And yet a strange compounded motive make,
Wherefore a man should bend his evening walk
To th' east or west, the forest or the field.
Is it not often so?
Freb. I ask no more, happy to see you here
From any motive. There is one behind,
Whose presence would have been a double bliss:
Ah! how is she? The noble Jane De Monfort.
De Mon. (*confused.*) She is — I have — I left my sister well.
Lady. (*to* Freberg.) My Freberg, you are heedless of respect:
You surely mean to say the Lady Jane.
Freb. Respect! No, Madam; Princess, Empress, Queen,
Could not denote a creature so exalted
As this plain appellation doth,
The noble Jane De Monfort.
Lady. (*turning from him displeased to* Mon.)
You are fatigued, my Lord; you want repose;

Say, should we not retire?

Freb. Ha! is it so?
My friend, your face is pale, have you been ill?

De Mon. No, Freberg, no; I think I have been well.

Freb. (*shaking his head.*) I fear thou hast not, Monfort — Let it pass.
We'll re-establish thee: we'll banish pain.
I will collect some rare, some cheerful friends,
And we shall spend together glorious hours,
That gods might envy. Little time so spent
Doth far outvalue all our life beside.
This is indeed our life, our waking life,
The rest dull breathing sleep.

De Mon. Thus, it is true, from the sad years of life
We sometimes do short hours, yea minutes strike,
Keen, blissful bright, never to be forgotten;
Which, thro' the dreary gloom of time o'erpast,
Shine like fair sunny spots on a wild waste.
But few they are, as few the heaven-fir'd souls
Whose magick power creates them. Bless'd art thou,
If, in the ample circle of thy friends,
Thou canst but boast a few.

Freb. Judge for thyself: in truth I do not boast.
There is amongst my friends, my later friends,
A most accomplish'd stranger: new to Amberg;
But just arriv'd, and will ere long depart,
I met him in Franconia two years since.
He is so full of pleasant anecdote,

So rich, so gay, so poignant is his wit,
Time vanishes before him as he speaks,
And ruddy morning thro' the lattice peeps
Ere night seems well begun.

De Mon. How is he call'd?

Freb. I will surprise thee with a welcome face:
I will not tell thee now.

Lady. (*to* Mon.) I have, my Lord, a small request to make,
And must not be denied. I too may boast
Of some good friends, and beauteous country-women:
To-morrow night I open wide my doors
To all the fair and gay: beneath my roof
Musick, and dance, and revelry shall reign:
I pray you come and grace it with your presence.

De Mon. You honour me too much to be denied.

Lady. I thank you, Sir; and in return for this,
We shall withdraw, and leave you to repose.

Freb. Must it be so? Good night — sweet sleep to thee! (*To* De Monfort.)

De Mon. (*to* Freb.) Good night. (*To Lady.*) Good night, fair Lady.

Lady. Farewell!

[EXEUNT Freberg *and* Lady.

De Mon. (to Jer.) I thought Count Freberg had been now in France.

Jer. He meant to go, as I have been inform'd.

De Mon. Well, well, prepare my bed; I will to rest. (EXIT Jerome.)

De Mon. (*aside.*) I know not how it is, my heart stands back,
And meets not this man's love. — Friends! rarest friends!
Rather than share his undiscerning praise
With every table-wit, and book-form'd sage,
And paltry poet puling to the moon,
I'd court from him proscription, yea abuse,
And think it proud distinction. (EXIT.)

SCENE II.

A small Apartment in JEROME'*s House: a table and breakfast set out. Enter* DE MONFORT, *followed by* MANUEL, *and sets himself down by the table, with a cheerful face.*

De Mon. Manuel, this morning's sun shines pleasantly:
These old apartments too are light and cheerful.
Our landlord's kindness has reviv'd me much;
He serves as though he lov'd me. This pure air
Braces the listless nerves, and warms the blood:
I feel in freedom here.
(*Filling a cup of coffee, and drinking.*)
Man. Ah! sure, my Lord,
No air is purer than the air at home.
De Mon. Here can I wander with assured steps,
Nor dread, at every winding of the path,
Lest an abhorred serpent cross my way,
To move — (*Stopping short.*)
Man. What says your honour?

There are no serpents in our pleasant fields.

De Mon. Think'st thou there are no serpents in the world,
But those who slide along the grassy sod,
And sting the luckless foot that presses them?
There are who in the path of social life
Do bask their spotted skins in Fortune's sun,
And sting the soul — Ay, till its healthful frame
Is chang'd to secret, fest'ring, sore disease,
So deadly is the wound.

Man. Heaven guard your honour from such horrid skathe!
They are but rare, I hope!

De Mon. (*shaking his head.*) We mark the hollow eye, the wasted frame,
The gait disturb'd of wealthy honour'd men,
But do not know the cause.

Man. 'Tis very true. God keep you well, my Lord!

De Mon. I thank thee, Manuel, I am very well.
I shall be gay too, by the setting sun.
I go to revel it with sprightly dames,
And drive the night away.
(*Filling another cup, and drinking.*)

Man. I should be glad to see your honour gay.

De Mon. And thou too shalt be gay. There, honest Manuel,
Put these broad pieces in thy leathern purse,
And take at night a cheerful jovial glass.
Here is one too, for Bremer: he loves wine;
And one for Jaques: be joyful all together.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. My Lord, I met e'en now, a short way off,
Your countryman the Marquis Rezenvelt.

De Mon. (*starting from his seat, and letting the cup fall from his hand.*) Who says't thou?

Ser. Marquis Rezenvelt, an' please you.

De Mon. Thou ly'st — it is not so — it is impossible!

Ser. I saw him with these eyes, plain as yourself.

De Mon. Fool! 'tis some passing stranger thou hast seen,
And with a hideous likeness been deceiv'd.

Ser. No other stranger could deceive my sight.

De Mon. (*dashing his clenched hand violently upon the table, and overturning every thing.*) Heaven blast thy sight! it lights on nothing good.

Ser. I surely thought no harm to look upon him.

De Mon. What, dost thou still insist? Him must it be?
Does it so please thee well? (Servant *endeavours to speak.*) Hold thy damn'd tongue!
By heaven I'll kill thee! (*Going furiously up to him.*)

Man. (*in a soothing voice.*) Nay, harm him not, my Lord; he speaks the truth;
I've met his groom, who told me certainly
His Lord is here. I should have told you so,
But thought, perhaps, it might displease your honour.

De Mon. (*becoming all at once calm, and turning sternly to* Manuel.) And how dar'st thou
to think it would displease me?
What is't to me who leaves or enters Amberg?
But it displeases me, yea ev'n to frenzy,
That every idle fool must hither come,
To break my leisure with the paltry tidings
Of all the cursed things he stares upon.
(Servant *attempts to speak* — De Monfort
stamps with his foot.)
Take thine ill-favour'd visage from my sight,
And speak of it no more. (EXIT Servant.)
And go thou too; I choose to be alone.
(EXIT Manuel.)
(De Monfort *goes to the door by which they went out; opens it, and looks.*)
But is he gone indeed? Yes, he is gone.
(*Goes to the opposite door, opens it, and looks: then gives loose to all the fury of gesture, and walks up and down in great agitation.*)
It is too much: by heaven it is too much!
He haunts me — stings me — like a devil haunts —
He'll make a raving maniack of me — Villain!
The air wherein thou draw'st thy fulsome breath
Is poison to me — Oceans shall divide us! (*Pauses.*)
But no; thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile;
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still.
(*Knocking at the chamber door.*)
Ha! who knocks there?

Freberg. (*without.*) It is thy friend, De Monfort.
De Mon. (*opening the door.*) Enter, then.

Enter FREBERG.

Freb. (*taking his hand kindly.*) How art thou now? How hast thou past the night?
Has kindly sleep refresh'd thee?
De Mon. Yes, I have lost an hour or two in sleep,
And so should be refresh'd.
Freb. And art thou not?
Thy looks speak not of rest. Thou art disturb'd.
De Mon. No, somewhat ruffled from a foolish cause,
Which soon will pass away.
Freb. (*shaking his head.*) Ah no, De Monfort! something in thy face
Tells me another tale. Then wrong me not:
If any secret grief distract thy soul,
Here am I all devoted to thy love:
Open thy heart to me. What troubles thee?
De Mon. I have no grief: distress me not, my friend.
Freb. Nay, do not call me so. Wert thou my friend,
Wouldst thou not open all thine inmost soul,
And bid me share its every consciousness?
De Mon. Freberg, thou know'st not man; not nature's man,
But only him who, in smooth studied works

Of polish'd sages, shines deceitfully
In all the splendid foppery of virtue.
That man was never born whose secret soul,
With all its motley treasure of dark thoughts,
Foul fantasies, vain musings, and wild dreams,
Was ever open'd to another's scan.
Away, away! it is delusion all.

Freb. Well, be reserv'd then; perhaps I'm wrong.

De Mon. How goes the hour?

Freb. 'Tis early still; a long day lies before us?
Let us enjoy it. Come along with me;
I'll introduce you to my pleasant friend.

De Mon. Your pleasant friend?

Freb. Yes, him of whom I spake.
(*Taking his hand.*)
There is no good I would not share with thee;
And this man's company, to minds like thine,
Is the best banquet-feast I could bestow.
But I will speak in mystery no more;
It is thy townsman, noble Rezenvelt.
(De Mon. *pulls his hand hastily from* Freberg, *and shrinks back.*) Ha! what is this?
Art thou pain-stricken, Monfort?
Nay, on my life, thou rather seem'st offended:
Does it displease thee that I call him friend?

De Mon. No, all men are thy friends.

Freb. No, say not all men. But thou art offended.
I see it well. I thought to do thee pleasure.

But if his presence is not welcome here,
He shall not join our company to-day.

De Mon. What dost thou mean to say? What is't to me
Whether I meet with such a thing as Rezenvelt
To-day, to-morrow, every day, or never?

Freb. In truth, I thought you had been well with him;
He prais'd you much

De Mon. I thank him for his praise — Come, let us move:
This chamber is confin'd and airless grown.
(*Starting.*)
I hear a stranger's voice!

Freb. 'Tis Rezenvelt.
Let him be told that we are gone abroad.

De Mon. (*proudly,*) No! let him enter. Who waits there? Ho! Manuel!

Enter MANUEL.

What stranger speaks below?

Man. The Marquis Rezenvelt.
I have not told him that you are within.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) And wherefore didst thou not? Let him ascend.

(*A long pause.* De Monfort *walking up and down with a quick pace.*)

Enter REZENVELT, *and runs freely up to* De Monfort.

Rez. (*to* De Mon.) My noble Marquis, welcome!

De Mon. Sir, I thank you.

Rez. (*to* Freb.) My gentle friend, well met. Abroad so early?

Freb. It is indeed an early hour for me.
How sits thy last night's revel on thy spirits?

Rez. O, light as ever. On my way to you,
E'en now, I learnt De Monfort was arriv'd,
And turn'd my steps aside; so here I am.
(*Bowing gaily to* De Monfort.)

De Mon. I thank you, Sir; you do me too much honour. (*Proudly.*)

Rez. Nay, say not so; not too much honour surely,
Unless, indeed, 'tis more than pleases you.

De Mon. (*confused.*) Having no previous notice of your coming,
I look'd not for it.

Rez. Ay, true indeed; when I approach you next,
I'll send a herald to proclaim my coming,
And bow to you by sound of trumpet, Marquis.

De Mon. (*to* Freb. *turning haughtily from* Rezenvelt *with affected indifference.*) How does your cheerful friend, that good old man?

Freb. My cheerful friend? I know not whom you mean.

De Mon. Count Waterlan.

Freb. I know not one so nam'd

De Mon. (*very confused.*) O pardon me — it was at Bâle I knew him.

Freb. You have not yet inquir'd for honest Reisdale.
I met him as I came, and mention'd you.
He seem'd amaz'd ; and fain he would have learnt
What cause procur'd us so much happiness.
He question'd hard, and hardly would believe,
I could not satisfy his strong desire.

Rez. And know you not what brings De Monfort here ?

Freb. Truly, I do not.

Rez. O ! 'tis love of me.
I have but two short days in Amberg been,
And here with postman's speed he follows me,
Finding his home so dull and tiresome grown.

Freb. (*to* De Mon.) Is Rezenvelt so sadly miss'd with you ?
Your town so chang'd ?

De Mon. Not altogether so ;
Some witlings and jest-mongers still remain
For fools to laugh at.

Rez. But he laughs not, and therefore he is wise.
He ever frowns on them with sullen brow
Contemptuous ; therefore he is very wise.
Nay, daily frets his most refined soul
With their poor folly, to its inmost core ;
Therefore he is most eminently wise.

Freb. Fy, Rezenvelt ! you are too early gay.
Such spirits rise but with the ev'ning glass :
They suit not placid morn.

(*To* De Monfort, *who, after walking impatiently up and down, comes close to his ear, and lays hold of his arm.*)

What would you, Monfort?

De Mon. Nothing — what is't o'clock?
No, no — I had forgot — 'tis early still.
(*Turns away again.*)

Freb. (*to* Rez.) Waltser informs me that you have agreed
To read his verses o'er, and tell the truth.
It is a dangerous task.

Rez. Yet I'll be honest:
I can but lose his favour and a feast.

(*Whilst they speak,* De Monfort *walks up and down impatiently and irresolute: at last pulls the bell violently.*)

Enter SERVANT.

De Mon. (*to* Ser.) What dost thou want?

Ser. I thought your honour rung.

De Mon. I have forgot — stay; are my horses saddled?

Ser. I thought, my Lord, you would not ride to-day,
After so long a journey.

De Mon. (*impatiently.*) Well — 'tis good.
Begone! — I want thee not. [EXIT Servant.

Rez. (*smiling significantly.*) I humbly crave your pardon, gentle Marquis.
It grieves me that I cannot stay with you,

And make my visit of a friendly length.
I trust your goodness will excuse me now;
Another time I shall be less unkind.
(*To* Freberg.) Will you not go with me?
Freb. Excuse me, Monfort, I'll return again.
[EXEUNT Rezenvelt *and* Freberg.
De Mon. (*alone, tossing his arms distractedly.*)
Hell hath no greater torment for th' accurs'd
Than this man's presence gives —
Abhorred fiend! he hath a pleasure too,
A damned pleasure in the pain he gives!
Oh! the side glance of that detested eye!
That conscious smile! that full insulting lip!
It touches every nerve: it makes me mad.
What, does it please thee? Dost thou woo my hate?
Hate shalt thou have! determin'd, deadly hate.
Which shall awake no smile. Malignant villain!
The venom of thy mind is rank and devilish,
And thin the film that hides it.
Thy hateful visage ever spoke thy worth:
I loath'd thee when a boy.
That men should be besotted with him thus!
And Freberg likewise so bewitched is,
That like a hireling flatt'rer, at his heels
He meanly paces, off'ring brutish praise.
O! I could curse him too! [EXIT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A very splendid apartment in* Count Freberg's *house, fancifully decorated. A wide folding door opened, shows another magnificent room lighted up to receive company. Enter through the folding doors the* Count *and* Countess, *richly dressed.*

Freb. (*looking round.*) In truth, I like those decorations well:
They suit those lofty walls. And here, my love,
The gay profusion of a woman's fancy
Is well display'd. Noble simplicity
Becomes us less, on such a night as this,
Than gaudy show.

Lady. Is it not noble then? (*He shakes his head.*) I thought it so;
And as I know you love simplicity,
I did intend it should be simple too.

Freb. Be satisfy'd, I pray; we want to-night
A cheerful banquet-house, and not a temple.
How runs the hour?

Lady. It is not late, but soon we shall be rous'd
With the loud entry of our frolic guests.

Enter a Page, *richly dressed.*

Page. Madam, there is a lady in your hall,
Who begs to be admitted to your presence.

Lady. Is it not one of our invited friends?

Page. No, far unlike to them; it is a stranger.

Lady. How looks her countenance?

Page. So queenly, so commanding, and so noble,
I shrunk at first in awe ; but when she smil'd,
For so she did to see me thus abash'd,
Methought I could have compass'd sea and land
To do her bidding.

Lady. Is she young or old?

Page. Neither, if right I guess ; but she is fair :
For time hath laid his hand so gently on her,
As he too had been aw'd.

Lady. The foolish stripling!
She has bewitch'd thee. Is she large in stature?

Page. So stately and so graceful is her form,
I thought at first her stature was gigantic ;
But on a near approach I found, in truth,
She scarcely does surpass the middle size.

Lady. What is her garb?

Page. I cannot well describe the fashion of it.
She is not deck'd in any gallant trim,
But seems to me clad in the usual weeds
Of high habitual state ; for as she moves
Wide flows her robe in many a waving fold,
As I have seen unfurled banners play
With the soft breeze.

Lady Thine eyes deceive thee, boy ;
It is an apparition thou hast seen.

Freb. (*starting from his seat, where he has been sitting during the conversation between the* Lady *and the* Page.) It is an apparition he has seen,
Or it is Jane De Monfort. [EXIT, *hastily.*

Lady. (*displeased.*) No; such description surely
suits not her.
Did she inquire for me?
Page. She ask'd to see the lady of Count Freberg.
Lady. Perhaps it is not she — I fear it is —
Ha! here they come. He has but guess'd too
well.

Enter FREBERG, *leading in* JANE DE MONFORT.

Freb. (*presenting her to* Lady.) Here, Madam,
welcome a most worthy guest.
Lady. Madam, a thousand welcomes! Pardon
me;
I could not guess who honour'd me so far;
I should not else have waited coldly here.
Jane. I thank you for this welcome, gentle
Countess;
But take those kind excuses back again;
I am a bold intruder on this hour,
And am entitled to no ceremony.
I came in quest of a dear truant friend,
But Freberg has inform'd me —
(*To* Freberg.) And he is well you say?
Freb. Yes, well, but joyless.
Jane. It is the usual temper of his mind;
It opens not, but with the thrilling touch
Of some strong heart-string o'the sudden press'd.
Freb. It may be so, I've known him otherwise:
He is suspicious grown.

Jane. Not so, Count Freberg, Monfort is too noble.
Say rather, that he is a man in grief,
Wearing at times a strange and scowling eye;
And thou, less generous than beseems a friend,
Hast thought too hardly of him.
Freb. (*bowing with great respect.*) So will I say;
I'll own nor word nor will, that can offend you.
Lady. De Monfort is engag'd to grace our feast;
Ere long you'll see him here.
Jane. I thank you truly, but this homely dress
Suits not the splendour of such scenes as these.
Freb. (*pointing to her dress.*) Such artless and majestic elegance,
So exquisitely just, so nobly simple,
Will make the gorgeous blush.
Jane. (*smiling.*) Nay, nay, be more consistent, courteous knight,
And do not praise a plain and simple guise
With such profusion of unsimple words.
I cannot join your company to-night.
Lady. Not stay to see your brother?
Jane Therefore it is I would not, gentle hostess.
Here will he find all that can woo the heart
To joy and sweet forgetfulness of pain;
The sight of me would wake his feeling mind
To other thoughts. I am no doating mistress;
No fond distracted wife, who must forthwith
Rush to his arms and weep. I am his sister:

The eldest daughter of his father's house:
Calm and unwearied is my love for him;
And having found him, patiently I'll wait,
Nor greet him in the hour of social joy,
To dash his mirth with tears.—
The night wears on; permit me to withdraw.

Freb. Nay, do not, do not injure us so far!
Disguise thyself, and join our friendly train.

Jane. You wear not masks to-night.

Lady. We wear not masks, but you may be conceal'd
Behind the double foldings of a veil.

Jane. (*after pausing to consider.*) In truth, I feel a little so inclin'd.
Methinks unknown, I e'en might speak to him,
And gently prove the temper of his mind;
But for the means I must become your debtor.
(*To* Lady.)

Lady. Who waits? (*Enter her* Woman.) Attend this lady to my wardrobe,
And do what she commands you.

[EXEUNT Jane *and* Waiting-woman.

Freb. (*looking after* Jane, *as she goes out, with admiration.*) Oh! what a soul she bears! see how she steps!
Nought but the native dignity of worth
E'er taught the moving form such noble grace.

Lady. Such lofty mien, and high assumed gait
I've seen ere now, and men have call'd it pride.

Freb. No, 'faith! thou never didst, but oft indeed

The paltry imitation thou hast seen.
(*Looking at her.*) How hang those trappings on thy motley gown?
They seem like garlands on a May-day queen,
Which hinds have dress'd in sport.
(Lady *turns away displeased.*)
Freb. Nay, do not frown; I spoke it but in haste:
For thou art lovely still in every garb.
But see, the guests assemble.

Enter groups of well-dressed people, who pay their compliments to Freberg *and his* Lady; *and, followed by her, pass into the inner apartment, where more company appear assembling, as if by another entry.*

Freb. (*who remains on the front of the stage with a friend or two.*) How loud the hum of this gay-meeting crowd!
'Tis like a bee-swarm in the noonday sun.
Music will quell the sound. Who waits without?
Music strike up.

Music, and when it ceases, enter from the inner apartment Rezenvelt, *with several gentlemen, all richly dressed.*)

Freb. (*to those just entered.*) What, lively gallants, quit the field so soon?
Are there no beauties in that moving crowd
To fix your fancy?
Rez. Ay, marry, are there! men of ev'ry fancy
May in that moving crowd some fair one find

To suit their taste, tho' whimsical and strange,
As ever fancy own'd.
Beauty of every cast and shade is there,
From the perfection of a faultless form,
Down to the common, brown unnoted maid,
Who looks but pretty in her Sunday gown.
1st Gent. There is, indeed, a gay variety.
Rez. And if the liberality of nature
Suffices not, there 's store of grafted charms,
Blending in one the sweets of many plants,
So obstinately, strangely opposite,
As would have well defy'd all other art
But female cultivation. Aged youth,
With borrow'd locks, in rosy chaplets bound,
Clothes her dim eye, parch'd lips, and skinny cheek
In most unlovely softness:
And youthful age, with fat round trackless face,
The down-cast look of contemplation deep
Most pensively assumes.
Is it not even so? The native prude,
With forced laugh, and merriment uncouth,
Plays off the wild coquet's successful charms
With most unskilful pains; and the coquet,
In temporary crust of cold reserve,
Fixes her studied looks upon the ground
Forbiddingly demure.
Freb. Fy! thou art too severe.
Rez. Say, rather, gentle.
I' faith! the very dwarfs attempt to charm
With lofty airs of puny majesty;
Whilst potent damsels, of a portly make,

Totter like nurslings, and demand the aid
Of gentle sympathy.
From all those diverse modes of dire assault,
He owns a heart of hardest adamant,
Who shall escape to-night.

Freb. (*to* De Mon. *who has entered during* Rezenvelt's *speech, and heard the greatest part of it.*) Ha, ha, ha, ha!
How pleasantly he gives his wit the rein,
Yet guides its wild career!

(De Mon. *is silent*)

Rez. (*smiling archly.*) What, think you, Freberg, the same powerful spell
Of transformation reigns o'er all to-night?
Or that De Monfort is a woman turn'd.
So widely from his native self to swerve,
As grace my folly with a smile of his?

De Mon. Nay, think not, Rezenvelt, there is no smile
I can bestow on thee. There is a smile,
A smile of nature too, which I can spare,
And yet, perhaps, thou wilt not thank me for it.

(*Smiles contemptuously.*)

Rez. Not thank thee! It were surely most ungrateful
No thanks to pay for nobly giving me
What, well we see, has cost thee so much pain.
For nature hath her smiles of birth more painful
Than bitt'rest execrations.

Freb. These idle words will lead us to disquiet:
Forbear, forbear, my friends! Go, Rezenvelt,

Accept the challenge of those lovely dames,
Who thro' the portal come with bolder steps
To claim your notice.

(*Enter a group of* Ladies *from the other apartment, who walk slowly across the bottom of the stage, and return to it again.* Rez. *shrugs up his shoulders, as if unwilling to go.*)

1*st Gent.* (*to* Rez.) Behold in sable veil a lady comes,
Whose noble air doth challenge fancy's skill
To suit it with a countenance as goodly.

(*Pointing to* Jane De Mon. *who now enters in a thick black veil.*)

Rez. Yes, this way lies attraction. (*To* Freb.) With permission (*Going up to* Jane.)
Fair lady, tho' within that envious shroud
Your beauty deigns not to enlighten us,
We bid you welcome, and our beauties here
Will welcome you the more for such concealment.
With the permission of our noble host —

(*Taking her hand, and leading her to the front of the stage.*)

Jane. (*to* Freb.) Pardon me this presumption, courteous Sir:
I thus appear, (*pointing to her veil.*) not careless of respect
Unto the generous lady of the feast.
Beneath this veil no beauty shrouded is,
That, now, or pain, or pleasure can bestow.
Within the friendly cover of its shade

I only wish, unknown, again to see
One who, alas! is heedless of my pain.
De Mon. Yes, it is ever thus. Undo that veil,
And give thy count'nance to the cheerful light.
Men now all soft, and female beauty scorn,
And mock the gentle cares which aim to please.
It is most damnable! undo thy veil,
And think of him no more.
Jane. I know it well even to a proverb grown,
Is lovers' faith, and I had borne such slight:
But he, who has, alas! forsaken me,
Was the companion of my early days,
My cradle's mate, mine infant play-fellow.
Within our op'ning minds, with riper years,
The love of praise and gen'rous virtue sprung:
Thro' varied life our pride, our joys were one;
At the same tale we wept: he is my brother.
De Mon. And he forsook thee? — No, I dare not curse him:
My heart upbraids me with a crime like his.
Jane. Ah! do not thus distress a feeling heart.
All sisters are not to the soul entwin'd
With equal banns; thine has not watch'd for thee,
Wept for thee, cheer'd thee, shar'd thy weal and woe,
As I have done for him.
De Mon. (*eagerly.*) Ah! has she not?
By heav'n the sum of all thy kindly deeds
Were but as chaff pois'd against massy gold,
Compar'd to that which I do owe her love.

Oh, pardon me! I mean not to offend —
I am too warm — but she of whom I speak
Is the dear sister of my earliest love;
In noble, virtuous worth to none a second:
And tho' behind those sable folds were hid
As fair a face as ever woman own'd,
Still would I say she is as fair as thou.
How oft amidst the beauty-blazing throng,
I've proudly to th' inquiring stranger told
Her name and lineage! yet within her house,
The virgin mother of an orphan race
Her dying parents left, this noble woman
Did, like a Roman matron proudly sit,
Despising all the blandishments of love;
Whilst many a youth his hopeless love conceal'd,
Or, humbly distant, woo'd her like a queen.
Forgive, I pray you! O forgive this boasting!
In faith! I mean you no discourtesy.

Jane. (*off her guard, in a soft natural tone of voice.*) Oh, no! nor do me any.

De Mon. What voice speaks now? Withdraw, withdraw this shade!
For if thy face bear semblance to thy voice,
I'll fall and worship thee. Pray! pray undo!

(*Puts forth his hand eagerly to snatch away the veil, whilst she shrinks back, and* Rezenvelt *steps between to prevent him.*)

Rez. Stand off: no hand shall lift this sacred veil.

De Mon. What, dost thou think De Monfort fall'n so low,

That there may live a man beneath heav'n's roof,
Who dares to say, he shall not?

Rez. He lives who dares to say —

Jane. (*throwing back her veil, much alarmed, and rushes between them.*) Forbear, forbear!

(Rezenvelt, *very much struck, steps back respectfully, and makes her a low bow.* De Monfort *stands for a while motionless, gazing upon her, till she, looking expressively to him, extends her arms, and he, rushing into them, bursts into tears.* Freberg *seems very much pleased. The company then advancing from the inner apartment, gather about them, and the Scene closes.*)

SCENE II.

De Monfort's *apartments.* *Enter* De Monfort, *with a disordered air, and his hand pressed upon his forehead, followed by* Jane.

De Mon. No more, my sister, urge me not again:
My secret troubles cannot be reveal'd.
From all participation of its thoughts
My heart recoils: I pray thee be contented.

Jane. What, must I, like a distant humble friend,
Observe thy restless eye, and gait disturb'd,
In timid silence, whilst with yearning heart
I turn aside to weep? O no! De Monfort!
A nobler task thy nobler mind will give;
Thy true entrusted friend I still shall be.

De Mon. Ah, Jane, forbear! I cannot e'en to thee.

Jane. Then, fy upon it! fy upon it, Monfort!
There was a time when e'en with murder stain'd,
Had it been possible that such dire deed
Could e'er have been the crime of one so piteous,
Thou wouldst have told it me.

De Mon. So would I now — but ask of this no more.
All other trouble but the one I feel
I had disclos'd to thee. I pray thee spare me.
It is the secret weakness of my nature.

Jane. Then secret let it be; I urge no farther.
The eldest of our valiant father's hopes,
So sadly orphan'd, side by side we stood,
Like two young trees, whose boughs in early strength
Skreen the weak saplings of the rising grove,
And brave the storm together —
I have so long, as if by nature's right,
Thy bosom's inmate and adviser been,
I thought thro' life I should have so remain'd,
Nor ever known a change. Forgive me, Monfort,
A humbler station will I take by thee:
The close attendant of thy wand'ring steps;
The cheerer of this home, with strangers sought;
The soother of those griefs I must not know:
This is mine office now: I ask no more.

De Mon. Oh, Jane! thou dost constrain me with thy love!
Would I could tell it thee!

Jane. Thou shalt not tell me. Nay I'll stop
mine ears,
Nor from the yearnings of affection wring
What shrinks from utt'rance. Let it pass, my
brother.
I'll stay by thee; I'll cheer thee, comfort thee:
Pursue with thee the study of some art,
Or nobler science, that compels the mind
To steady thought progressive, driving forth
All floating, wild, unhappy fantasies;
Till thou, with brow unclouded, smil'st again;
Like one who, from dark visions of the night,
When th' active soul within its lifeless cell
Holds its own world, with dreadful fancy press'd
Of some dire, terrible, or murd'rous deed,
Wakes to the dawning morn, and blesses heaven.

De Mon. It will not pass away; 'twill haunt me
still.

Jane. Ah! say not so, for I will haunt thee too;
And be to it so close an adversary,
That, though I wrestle darkling with the fiend,
I shall o'ercome it.

De Mon. Thou most gen'rous woman!
Why do I treat thee thus? It should not be —
And yet I cannot — O that cursed villain!
He will not let me be the man I would.

Jane. What say'st thou, Monfort? Oh! what
words are these?
They have awak'd my soul to dreadful thoughts.
I do beseech thee, speak!

(*He shakes his head, and turns from her; she following him.*)

By the affection thou didst ever bear me;
By the dear mem'ry of our infant days;
By kindred living ties, ay, and by those
Who sleep i'the tomb, and cannot call to thee,
I do conjure thee, speak!

(*He waves her off with his hand, and covers his face with the other, still turning from her.*)

Ha! wilt thou not?

(*Assuming dignity.*) Then, if affection, most unwearied love,
Tried early, long, and never wanting found,
O'er gen'rous man hath more authority,
More rightful power than crown or sceptre give,
I do command thee.

(*He throws himself into a chair, greatly agitated.*)

De Monfort, do not thus resist my love.
Here I entreat thee on my bended knees.

(*Kneeling.*)

Alas! my brother!

(De Monfort *starts up, and catching her in his arms, raises her up, then placing her in the chair, kneels at her feet.*)

De Mon. Thus let him kneel who should the abased be,
And at thine honour'd feet confession make.
I'll tell thee all — but, oh! thou wilt despise me.
For in my breast a raging passion burns,
To which thy soul no sympathy will own —
A passion which hath made my nightly couch
A place of torment; and the light of day,

With the gay intercourse of social man,
Feel like th' oppressive airless pestilence.
O Jane! thou wilt despise me:
Jane. Say not so:
I never can despise thee, gentle brother.
A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs
No kindly heart contemns.
De Mon. A lover, say'st thou?
No, it is hate! black, lasting, deadly hate!
Which thus hath driven me forth from kindred peace,
From social pleasure, from my native home,
To be a sullen wand'rer on the earth,
Avoiding all men, cursing and accurs'd.
Jane. De Monfort, this is fiend-like, frightful, terrible!
What being, by th' Almighty Father form'd,
Of flesh and blood, created even as thou,
Could in thy breast such horrid tempest wake,
Who art thyself his fellow?
Unknit thy brows, and spread those wrath-clench'd hands.
Some sprite accurs'd within thy bosom mates
To work thy ruin. Strive with it, my brother!
Strive bravely with it; drive it from thy breast:
'Tis the degrader of a noble heart:
Curse it, and bid it part.
De Mon. It will not part. (*His hand on his breast.*)
I've lodg'd it here too long:
With my first cares I felt its rankling touch;

I loath'd him when a boy.
Jane. Who didst thou say?
De Mon. Oh! that detested Rezenvelt!
E'en in our early sports, like two young whelps
Of hostile breed, instinctively reverse,
Each 'gainst the other pitch'd his ready pledge,
And frown'd defiance. As we onward pass'd
From youth to man's estate, his narrow art
And envious gibing malice, poorly veil'd
In the affected carelessness of mirth,
Still more detestable and odious grew.
There is no living being on this earth
Who can conceive the malice of his soul,
With all his gay and damned merriment,
To those, by fortune or by merit plac'd
Above his paltry self. When, low in fortune,
He look'd upon the state of prosp'rous men,
As nightly birds, rous'd from their murky holes,
Do scowl and chatter at the light of day,
I could endure it; even as we bear
Th' impotent bite of some half-trodden worm,
I could endure it. But when honours came,
And wealth and new-got titles fed his pride;
Whilst flatt'ring knaves did trumpet forth his praise,
And grov'ling idiots grinn'd applauses on him;
Oh! then I could no longer suffer it!
It drove me frantick. — What! what would I give!
What would I give to crush the bloated toad,
So rankly do I loathe him!

Jane. And would thy hatred crush the very man
Who gave to thee that life he might have ta'en?
That life which thou so rashly didst expose
To aim at his? Oh! this is horrible!

De Mon. Ha! thou hast heard it, then? From all the world,
But most of all from thee, I thought it hid.

Jane. I heard a secret whisper, and resolv'd
Upon the instant to return to thee.
Didst thou receive my letter?

De Mon. I did! I did! 'twas that which drove me hither.
I could not bear to meet thine eye again.

Jane. Alas! that, tempted by a sister's tears,
I ever left thy house! These few past months,
These absent months, have brought us all this woe.
Had I remain'd with thee it had not been.
And yet, methinks, it should not move you thus.
You dar'd him to the field; both bravely fought;
He more adroit disarm'd you; courteously
Return'd the forfeit sword, which, so return'd,
You did refuse to use against him more;
And then, as says report, you parted friends.

De Mon. When he disarm'd this curs'd, this worthless hand
Of its most worthless weapon, he but spar'd
From dev'lish pride, which now derives a bliss
In seeing me thus fetter'd, sham'd, subjected
With the vile favour of his poor forbearance;
Whilst he securely sits with gibing brow,
And basely bates me like a muzzled cur

Who cannot turn again. —
Until that day, till that accursed day,
I knew not half the torment of this hell,
Which burns within my breast. Heaven's lightnings blast him!

Jane. O this is horrible! Forbear, forbear!
Lest heaven's vengeance light upon thy head,
For this most impious wish.

De Mon. Then let it light.
Torments more fell than I have felt already
It cannot send. To be annihilated,
What all men shrink from; to be dust, be nothing,
Were bliss to me, compar'd to what I am!

Jane. Oh! wouldst thou kill me with these dreadful words?

De Mon. (*raising his hands to heaven.*) Let me but once upon his ruin look,
Then close mine eyes for ever!

(Jane, *in great distress, staggers back, and supports herself upon the side scene.* De Mon. *alarmed, runs up to her with a softened voice.*)

Ha! how is this? thou'rt ill; thou'rt very pale.
What have I done to thee? Alas, alas!
I meant not to distress thee. — O my sister!

Jane. (*shaking her head.*) I cannot speak to thee.

De Mon. I have kill'd thee.
Turn, turn thee not away! look on me still!

Oh! droop not thus, my life, my pride, my sister;
Look on me yet again.
Jane. Thou too, De Monfort,
In better days, were wont to be my pride.
De Mon. I am a wretch, most wretched in myself,
And still more wretched in the pain I give.
O curse that villain! that detested villain!
He has spread mis'ry o'er my fated life:
He will undo us all.
Jane. I've held my warfare through a troubled world,
And borne with steady mind my share of ill;
For then the helpmate of my toil wert thou.
But now the wane of life comes darkly on,
And hideous passion tears me from my heart,
Blasting thy worth. — I cannot strive with this.
De Mon. (*affectionately.*) What shall I do?
Jane. Call up thy noble spirit;
Rouse all the gen'rous energy of virtue;
And with the strength of heaven-endued man,
Repel the hideous foe. Be great; be valiant.
O, if thou couldst! e'en shrouded as thou art
In all the sad infirmities of nature,
What a most noble creature wouldst thou be!
De Mon. Ay, if I could: alas! alas! I cannot.
Jane. Thou canst, thou mayst, thou wilt.
We shall not part till I have turn'd thy soul.

Enter MANUEL.

De Mon. Ha! some one enters. Wherefore com'st thou here?

Man. Count Freberg waits your leisure.

De Mon. (*angrily.*) Begone, begone! — I cannot see him now. [EXIT Manuel.

Jane. Come to my closet; free from all intrusion,
I'll school thee there; and thou again shalt be
My willing pupil, and my gen'rous friend,
The noble Monfort I have lov'd so long,
And must not, will not lose.

De Mon. Do as thou wilt; I will not grieve thee more. [EXEUNT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.*— *Countess* FREBERG's *Dressing-room. Enter the Countess dispirited and out of humour, and throws herself into a chair: enter, by the opposite side,* THERESA.

Ther. Madam, I am afraid you are unwell:
What is the matter? does your head ache?

Lady. (*peevishly.*) No,

* This scene has been very much altered from what it was in the former editions of this play, and scene fifth of the last act will be found to be almost entirely changed. These alterations, though of no great importance, are, I hope, upon the whole, improvements.

'Tis not my head : concern thyself no more
With what concerns not thee.

Ther. Go you abroad to-night ?

Lady. Yes, thinkest thou I'll stay and fret at home ?

Ther. Then please to say what you would choose to wear : —
One of your newest robes ?

Lady. I hate them all.

Ther. Surely that purple scarf became you well,
With all those wreaths of richly-hanging flowers.
Did I not overhear them say, last night,
As from the crowded ball-room ladies past,
How gay and handsome, in her costly dress,
The Countess Freberg look'd ?

Lady. Didst thou o'erhear it ?

Ther. I did, and more than this.

Lady. Well, all are not so greatly prejudic'd ;
All do not think me like a May-day queen,
Which peasants deck in sport.

Ther. And who said this ?

Lady. (*putting her handkerchief to her eyes.*)
E'en my good lord, Theresa.

Ther. He said it but in jest. He loves you well.

Lady. I know as well as thou he loves me well.
But what of that ! he takes in me no pride :
Elsewhere his praise and admiration go,
And Jane De Monfort is not mortal woman.

Ther. The wondrous character this lady bears
For worth and excellence : from early youth
The friend and mother of her younger sisters,

Now greatly married, as I have been told,
From her most prudent care, may well excuse
The admiration of so good a man
As my good master is. And then, dear Madam,
I must confess, when I myself did hear
How she was come thro' the rough winter's storm,
To seek and comfort an unhappy brother,
My heart beat kindly to her.

Lady. Ay, ay, there is a charm in this I find:
But wherefore may she not have come as well
Through wintry storms to seek a lover too?

Ther. No, Madam, no, I could not think of this.

Lady. That would reduce her in your eyes, mayhap,
To woman's level. — Now I see my vengeance!
I'll tell it round that she is hither come,
Under pretence of finding out De Monfort,
To meet with Rezenvelt. When Freberg hears it,
'Twill help, I ween, to break this magick charm.

Ther. And say what is not, Madam?

Lady. How canst thou know that I shall say what is not?
'Tis like enough I shall but speak the truth.

Ther. Ah, no! there is —

Lady. Well, hold thy foolish tongue.
(Freberg's *voice is heard without. After hesitating.*)
I will not see him now. [EXIT.

(*Enter* Freberg *by the opposite side, passing on hastily.*)

Ther. Pardon, my Lord; I fear you are in haste.
Yet must I crave that you will give to me

The books my Lady mention'd to you: she
Has charg'd me to remind you.
Freb. I'm in haste. (*passing on.*)
Ther. Pray you, my Lord: your Countess wants them much;
The Lady Jane De Monfort ask'd them of her.
Freb. (*returning instantly.*) Are they for her? I knew not this before.
I will, then, search them out immediately.
There is nought good or precious in my keeping,
That is not dearly honour'd by her use.
Ther. My Lord, what would your gentle Countess say
If she o'erheard her own request neglected,
Until supported by a name more potent?
Freb. Think'st thou she is a fool, my good Theresa,
Vainly to please herself with childish thoughts
Of matching what is matchless — Jane De Monfort?
Think'st thou she is a fool, and cannot see,
That love and admiration often thrive
Tho' far apart?
(*Re-enter* LADY *with great violence.*)
Lady. I am a fool, not to have seen full well,
That thy best pleasure in o'er-rating so
This lofty stranger, is to humble me,
And cast a dark'ning shadow o'er my head.
Ay, wherefore dost thou stare upon me thus?
Art thou asham'd that I have thus surpris'd thee?
Well mayst thou be so!

Freb. True; thou rightly say'st.
Well may I be asham'd: not for the praise
Which I have ever openly bestow'd
On Monfort's noble sister; but that thus,
Like a poor mean and jealous listener,
She should be found, who is Count Freberg's wife.
Lady. Oh, I am lost and ruin'd! hated, scorn'd!
(*pretending to faint.*)
Freb. Alas, I have been too rough!
(*taking her hand and kissing it tenderly.*)
My gentle love! my own, my only love!
See, she revives again. How art thou, love?
Support her to her chamber, good Theresa.
I'll sit and watch by her. I've been too rough.
[EXEUNT: Lady *supported by* Freb. *and* Ther.

SCENE II.

DE MONFORT *discovered sitting by a table reading. After a little time he lays down his book, and continues in a thoughtful posture. Enter to him* JANE DE MONFORT.

Jane. Thanks, gentle brother. —
(*Pointing to the book.*)
Thy willing mind has rightly been employ'd:
Did not thy heart warm at the fair display
Of peace and concord and forgiving love?
De Mon. I know resentment may to love be turn'd;
Tho' keen and lasting, into love as strong:
And fiercest rivals in th' ensanguin'd field
Have cast their brandish'd weapons to the ground,

Joining their mailed breasts in close embrace,
With gen'rous impulse fir'd. I know right well
The darkest, fellest wrongs have been forgiven
Seventy times o'er from blessed heavenly love:
I've heard of things like these; I've heard and wept.
But what is this to me?

Jane. All, all, my brother!
It bids thee too that noble precept learn,
To love thine enemy.

De Mon. Th' uplifted stroke that would a wretch destroy,
Gorg'd with my richest spoil, stain'd with my blood,
I would arrest, and cry, "Hold! hold! have mercy."
But when the man most adverse to my nature;
Who e'en from childhood hath, with rude malevolence,
Withheld the fair respect all paid beside,
Turning my very praise into derision;
Who galls and presses me where'er I go,
Would claim the gen'rous feelings of my heart,
Nature herself doth lift her voice aloud,
And cries, "It is impossible!"

Jane. (*shaking her head.*) — Ah, Monfort, Monfort!

De Mon. I can forgive th' envenom'd reptile's sting,
But hate his loathsome self.

Jane. And canst thou do no more for love of heaven?

De Mon. Alas! I cannot now so school my mind
As holy men have taught, nor search it truly:
But this, my Jane, I'll do for love of thee;
And more it is than crowns could win me to,
Or any power but thine. I'll see the man.
Th' indignant risings of abhorrent nature;
The stern contraction of my scowling brows,
That like the plant whose closing leaves do shrink
At hostile touch, still knit at his approach;
The crooked curving lip, by instinct taught,
In imitation of disgustful things,
To pout and swell, I strictly will repress;
And meet him with a tamed countenance,
E'en as a townsman, who would live at peace,
And pay him the respect his station claims.
I'll crave his pardon too for all offence
My dark and wayward temper may have done.
Nay more, I will confess myself his debtor
For the forbearance I have curs'd so oft:
Life spar'd by him, more horrid than the grave
With all its dark corruption! This I'll do.
Will it suffice thee? More than this I cannot.

Jane. No more than this do I require of thee
In outward act, tho' in thy heart, my friend,
I hop'd a better change, and still will hope.
I told thee Freberg had propos'd a meeting.

De Mon. I know it well.

Jane. And Rezenvelt consents.
He meets you here; so far he shows respect.

De Mon. Well, let it be; the sooner past the better.

Jane. I'm glad to hear you say so, for, in truth,
He has propos'd for it an early hour.
'Tis almost near his time; I came to tell you.

De Mon. What, comes he here so soon? shame on his speed!
It is not decent thus to rush upon me.
He loves the secret pleasure he will feel
To see me thus subdu'd.

Jane. O say not so! he comes with heart sincere.

De Mon. Could we not meet elsewhere? from home — i' the fields,
Where other men — must I alone receive him?
Where is your agent, Freberg, and his friends,
That I must meet him here?
(*Walks up and down very much disturbed.*)
Now! didst thou say? — how goes the hour? — e'en now!
I would some other friend were first arriv'd.

Jane. See, to thy wish come Freberg and his dame.

De Mon. His lady too! why comes he not alone?
Must all the world stare upon our meeting?

Enter Count Freberg *and his Countess.*

Freb. A happy morrow to my noble marquis
And his most noble sister!

Jane. Gen'rous Freberg,
Your face, methinks, forebodes a happy morn,

Open and cheerful. What of Rezenvelt?

Freb. I left him at his home, prepar'd to follow:
He'll soon appear. (*To* De Monfort.) And now,
my worthy friend,
Give me your hand; this happy change delights
me.

(De Monfort *gives him his hand coldly, and they walk to the bottom of the stage together, in earnest discourse, whilst* Jane *and the* Countess *remain in the front.*)

Lady. My dearest Madam, will you pardon me?
I know Count Freberg's bus'ness with De Monfort,
And had a strong desire to visit you,
So much I wish the honour of your friendship;
For he retains no secret from mine ear.

Jane. (*archly.*) Knowing your prudence — You
are welcome, Madam;
So shall Count Freberg's lady ever be.

(De Monfort *and* Freberg, *returning towards the front of the stage, still engaged in discourse.*)

Freb. He is indeed a man, within whose breast
Firm rectitude and honour hold their seat,
Tho' unadorned with that dignity
Which were their fittest garb. Now, on my life!
I know no truer heart than Rezenvelt.

De Mon. Well, Freberg, well, there needs not
all this pains
To garnish out his worth: let it suffice;
I am resolv'd I will respect the man,
As his fair station and repute demand.

Methinks I see not at your jolly feasts
The youthful knight, who sung so pleasantly.
Freb. A pleasant circumstance detains him hence;
Pleasant to those who love high gen'rous deeds
Above the middle pitch of common minds;
And, tho' I have been sworn to secrecy,
Yet must I tell it thee.
This knight is near akin to Rezenvelt,
To whom an old relation, short while dead,
A good estate bequeathed, some leagues distant.
But Rezenvelt, now rich in fortune's store,
Disdain'd the sordid love of further gain,
And gen'rously the rich bequest resign'd
To this young man, blood of the same degree
To the deceas'd, and low in fortune's gifts,
Who is from hence to take possession of it:
Was it not nobly done?
De Mon. 'Twas right and honourable.
This morning is oppressive, warm, and heavy:
There hangs a foggy closeness in the air;
Dost thou not feel it?
Freb. O no! to think upon a gen'rous deed
Expands my soul, and makes me lightly breathe.
De Mon. Who gives the feast to-night? His name escapes me.
You say I am invited.
Freb. Old Count Waterlan.
In honour of your townsman's gen'rous gift,
He spreads the board.
De Mon. He is too old to revel with the gay.

Freb. But not too old is he to honour virtue.
I shall partake of it with open soul;
For, on my honest faith, of living men
I know not one, for talents, honour, worth,
That I should rank superior to Rezenvelt.

De Mon. How virtuous he hath been in three short days!

Freb. Nay, longer, Marquis; but my friendship rests
Upon the good report of other men,
And that has told me much.

(De Monfort *aside, going some steps hastily from* Freberg, *and rending his cloak with agitation as he goes.*)

Would he were come! by heav'n I would he were!
This fool besets me so.

(*Suddenly correcting himself, and joining the* Ladies, *who have retired to the bottom of the stage, he speaks to* Countess Freberg *with affected cheerfulness.*)

The sprightly dames of Amberg rise by times,
Untarnish'd with the vigils of the night.

Lady. Praise us not rashly, 'tis not always so.

De Mon. He does not rashly praise who praises you;
For he were dull indeed —

(*Stopping short, as if he heard something.*)

Lady. How dull indeed?

De Mon. I should have said—It has escap'd me now —

(*Listening again, as if he heard something.*)

Jane. (*to* De Mon.) What, hear you aught?
De Mon. (*hastily.*) 'Tis nothing.
Lady. (*to* De Mon.) Nay, do not let me lose it so, my Lord.
Some fair one has bewitch'd your memory,
And robs me of the half-form'd compliment.
Jane. Half-utter'd praise is to the curious mind
As to the eye half-veiled beauty is,
More precious than the whole. Pray pardon him.
Some one approaches. (*Listening.*)
Freb. No, no, it is a servant who ascends;
He will not come so soon.
De Mon. (*off his guard.*) 'Tis Rezenvelt: I heard his well-known foot,
From the first staircase, mounting step by step.
Freb. How quick an ear thou hast for distant sound?
I heard him not.

(De Monfort *looks embarrassed, and is silent.*)

Enter REZENVELT.

(De Monfort, *recovering himself, goes up to receive* Rezenvelt, *who meets him with a cheerful countenance.*)

De Mon. (*to* Rez.) I am, my Lord, beholden to you greatly.
This ready visit makes me much your debtor.
Rez. Then may such debts between us, noble Marquis,
Be oft incurr'd, and often paid again!
(*To* Jane.) Madam, I am devoted to your service,

And ev'ry wish of yours commands my will.
(*To* Countess.) Lady, good morning. (*To* Freb.)
Well, my gentle friend,
You see I have not linger'd long behind.

Freb. No, thou art sooner than I look'd for thee.

Rez. A willing heart adds feather to the heel,
And makes the clown a winged Mercury.

De Mon. Then let me say, that, with a grateful mind,
I do receive these tokens of good will;
And must regret, that, in my wayward moods,
I have too oft forgot the due regard
Your rank and talents claim.

Rez. No, no, De Monfort,
You have but rightly curb'd a wanton spirit,
Which makes me too neglectful of respect.
Let us be friends, and think of this no more.

Freb. Ay, let it rest with the departed shades
Of things which are no more; whilst lovely concord,
Follow'd by friendship sweet, and firm esteem,
Your future days enrich. O heavenly friendship!
Thou dost exalt the sluggish souls of men,
By thee conjoin'd, to great and glorious deeds;
As two dark clouds, when mix'd in middle air,
The vivid lightning's flash, and roar sublime.
Talk not of what is past, but future love.

De Mon. (*with dignity.*) No, Freberg, no, it must not. (*To* Rezenvelt.) No, my Lord,
I will not offer you an hand of concord,
And poorly hide the motives which constrain me,

I would that, not alone, these present friends,
But ev'ry soul in Amberg were assembled,
That I, before them all, might here declare
I owe my spared life to your forbearance.
(*Holding out his hand.*) Take this from one who
boasts no feeling warmth,
But never will deceive.

(Jane *smiles upon* De Monfort *with great approbation, and* Rezenvelt *runs up to him with open arms.*)

Rez. Away with hands! I'll have thee to my
breast.
Thou art, upon my faith, a noble spirit!

De Mon. (*shrinking back from him.*) Nay, if
you please, I am not so prepar'd —
My nature is of temperature too cold —
I pray you pardon me. (Jane's *countenance changes.*)
But take this hand, the token of respect;
The token of a will inclin'd to concord;
The token of a mind, that bears within
A sense impressive of the debt it owes you:
And cursed be its power, unnerv'd its strength,
If e'er again it shall be lifted up
To do you any harm!

Rez. Well, be it so, DeMonfort, I'm contented;
I'll take thy hand since I can have no more.
(*Carelessly.*) I take of worthy men whate'er they
give.
Their heart I gladly take, if not their hand;
If that too is withheld, a courteous word,
Or the civility of placid looks:

And, if e'en these are too great favours deem'd,
'Faith, I can set me down contentedly
With plain and homely greeting, or "God save ye!"

De Mon. (*aside, starting away from him some paces.*)
By the good light, he makes a jest of it!

(Jane *seems greatly distressed, and* Freberg *endeavours to cheer her.*)

Freb. (*to* Jane.) Cheer up, my noble friend; all will go well;
For friendship is no plant of hasty growth.
Tho' rooted in esteem's deep soil, the slow
And gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.
(*To the* Countess.) My love, the morning, now, is far advanc'd;
Our friends elsewhere expect us; take your leave.

Lady. (*to* Jane.) Farewell, dear Madam, till the ev'ning hour.

Freb. (*to* De Mon.) Good day, De Monfort. (*To* Jane.) Most devoutly yours.

Rez. (*to* Freb.) Go not too fast, for I will follow you.

[EXEUNT Freberg *and his* Lady.

(*To* Jane.) The Lady Jane is yet a stranger here:
She might, perhaps, in this your ancient city
Find somewhat worth her notice.

Jane. I thank you, Marquis, I am much engag'd;
I go not out to-day.

Rez. Then fare ye well! I see I cannot now

Be the proud man who shall escort you forth,
And shew to all the world my proudest boast,
The notice and respect of Jane De Monfort.

De Mon. (*aside impatiently.*) He says farewell, and goes not!

Jane. (*to* Rez.) You do me honour.

Rez. Madam, adieu! (*To* Jane.) Good morning, noble Marquis. [EXIT.

(Jane *and* De Monfort *look expressively to one another, without speaking, and then* EXEUNT *severally.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Hall or Ante-chamber, with the folding doors of an inner apartment open, which discovers the guests rising from a banquet. They enter and pass over the stage, and* EXEUNT; *and after them enter* REZENVELT *and* FREBERG.

Freb. Alas, my Rezenvelt!
I vainly hop'd the hand of gentle peace,
From this day's reconciliation sprung,
These rude unseemly jarrings had subdu'd;
But I have mark'd, e'en at the social board,
Such looks, such words, such tones, such untold things,
Too plainly told, 'twixt you and Monfort pass,
That I must now despair.
Yet who could think, two minds so much refin'd,

So near in excellence, should be remov'd,
So far remov'd, in gen'rous sympathy?
Rez. Ay, far remov'd indeed!
Freb. And yet, methought, he made a noble effort,
And with a manly plainness bravely told
The galling debt he owes to your forbearance.
Rez. 'Faith! so he did, and so did I receive it;
When, with spread arms, and heart e'en mov'd to tears,
I frankly proffer'd him a friend's embrace:
And, I declare, had he as such receiv'd it,
I from that very moment had forborne
All opposition, pride-provoking jest,
Contemning carelessness, and all offence;
And had caress'd him as a worthy heart,
From native weakness such indulgence claiming.
But since he proudly thinks that cold respect,
The formal tokens of his lordly favour,
So precious are, that I would sue for them
As fair distinction in the publick eye,
Forgetting former wrongs, I spurn it all.
And but that I do bear that noble woman,
His worthy, his incomparable sister,
Such fix'd profound regard, I would expose him;
And as a mighty bull, in senseless rage,
Rous'd at the baiter's will, with wretched rags
Of ire-provoking scarlet, chafes and bellows,
I'd make him at small cost of paltry wit,
With all his deep and manly faculties,
The scorn and laugh of fools.

Freb. For heaven's sake, my friend, restrain your wrath!
For what has Monfort done of wrong to you,
Or you to him, bating one foolish quarrel,
Which you confess from slight occasion rose,
That in your breasts such dark resentment dwells,
So fix'd, so hopeless?

Rez. O! from our youth he has distinguish'd me
With ev'ry mark of hatred and disgust.
For e'en in boyish sports I still oppos'd
His proud pretensions to pre-eminence;
Nor would I to his ripen'd greatness give
That fulsome adulation of applause
A senseless crowd bestow'd. Tho' poor in fortune,
I still would smile at vain assuming wealth:
But when unlook'd-for fate on me bestow'd
Riches and splendour equal to his own,
Tho' I, in truth, despise such poor distinction,
Feeling inclin'd to be at peace with him,
And with all men besides, I curb'd my spirit,
And sought to soothe him. Then, with spiteful rage,
From small offence he rear'd a quarrel with me,
And dar'd me to the field. The rest you know.
In short, I still have been th' opposing rock,
O'er which the stream of his o'erflowing pride
Hath foam'd and fretted. See'st thou how it is?

Freb. Too well I see, and warn thee to beware,
Such streams have oft, by swelling floods sur-charg'd,

Borne down, with sudden and impetuous force,
The yet unshaken stone of opposition,
Which had for ages stopp'd their flowing course.
I pray thee, friend, beware.

Rez. Thou canst not mean—he will not murder me?

Freb. What a proud heart, with such dark passion toss'd,
May, in the anguish of its thoughts, conceive,
I will not dare to say.

Rez. Ha ha! thou know'st him not.
Full often have I mark'd it in his youth,
And could have almost lov'd him for the weakness:
He's form'd with such antipathy, by nature,
To all infliction of corporeal pain,
To wounding life, e'en to the sight of blood,
He cannot if he would.

Freb. Then fye upon thee!
It is not gen'rous to provoke him thus.
But let us part: we'll talk of this again.
Something approaches.—We are here too long.

Rez. Well, then, to-morrow I'll attend your call.
Here lies my way. Good night. [EXIT.

Enter CONRAD.

Con. Forgive, I pray, my Lord, a stranger's boldness.
I have presum'd to wait your leisure here,
Though at so late an hour.

Freb. But who art thou?

Con. My name is Conrad, Sir,
A humble suitor to your honour's goodness,
Who is the more embolden'd to presume,
In that De Monfort's brave and noble Marquis
Is so much fam'd for good and gen'rous deeds.

Freb. You are mistaken, I am not the man.

Con. Then, pardon me: I thought I could not err;
That mien so dignified, that piercing eye
Assur'd me it was he.

Freb. My name is not De Monfort, courteous stranger;
But, if you have a favour to request,
I may, with him, perhaps, befriend your suit.

Con. I thank your honour, but I have a friend
Who will commend me to De Monfort's favour:
The Marquis Rezenvelt has known me long,
Who, says report, will soon become his brother.

Freb. If thou would'st seek thy ruin from De Monfort,
The name of Rezenvelt employ, and prosper;
But, if aught good, use any name but his.

Con. How may this be?

Freb. I cannot now explain.
Early to-morrow call upon Count Freberg;
So am I call'd, each burgher knows my house,
And there instruct me how to do you service.
Good-night. [EXIT.

Con. (*alone.*) Well, this mistake may be of service to me:

And yet my bus'ness I will not unfold
To this mild, ready, promise-making courtier;
I've been by such too oft deceiv'd already.
But if such violent enmity exists
Between De Monfort and this Rezenvelt,
He'll prove my advocate by opposition.
For if De Monfort would reject my suit,
Being the man whom Rezenvelt esteems,
Being the man he hates, a cord as strong,
Will he not favour me? I'll think of this.

[EXIT.

SCENE II.

A lower Apartment in JEROME's *House, with a wide folding glass door, looking into a garden, where the trees and shrubs are brown and leafless. Enter* DE MONFORT *with a thoughtful frowning aspect, and paces slowly across the stage,* Jerome *following behind him, with a timid step.* De Monfort *hearing him, turns suddenly about.*

De Mon. (*angrily.*) Who follows me to this sequester'd room?

Jer. I have presum'd, my Lord. 'Tis somewhat late:
I am inform'd you eat at home to-night;
Here is a list of all the dainty fare
My busy search has found; please to peruse it.

De Mon, Leave me: begone! Put hemlock in thy soup,
Or deadly night-shade, or rank hellebore,

And I will mess upon it.

Jer. Heaven forbid!

Your honour's life is all too precious, sure —

De Mon. (*sternly.*) Did I not say begone?

Jer. Pardon, my Lord, I'm old, and oft forget.

[EXIT.

De Mon. (*looking after him, as if his heart smote him.*) Why will they thus mistime their foolish zeal,

That I must be so stern?

O, that I were upon some desert coast!

Where howling tempests and the lashing tide

Would stun me into deep and senseless quiet;

As the storm-beaten trav'ller droops his head,

In heavy, dull, lethargick weariness,

And, 'midst the roar of jarring elements,

Sleeps to awake no more.

What am I grown? all things are hateful to me.

Enter MANUEL.

(*stamping with his foot.*) Who bids thee break upon my privacy?

Man. Nay, good my Lord! I heard you speak aloud,

And dreamt not, surely, that you were alone.

De Mon. What, dost thou watch, and pin thine ears to holes,

To catch those exclamations of the soul,

Which heaven alone should hear? Who hir'd thee, pray?

Who basely hir'd thee for a task like this?

Man. My Lord, I cannot hold. For fifteen years,
Long-troubled years, I have your servant been,
Nor hath the proudest lord in all the realm,
With firmer, with more honourable faith
His sov'reign serv'd, than I have served you;
But if my honesty is doubted now,
Let him who is more faithful take my place,
And serve you better.

De Mon. Well, be it as thou wilt. Away with thee!
Thy loud-mouth'd boasting is no rule for me
To judge thy merit by.

Enter JEROME *hastily, and pulls* MANUEL *away.*

Jer. Come, Manuel, come away; thou art not wise.
The stranger must depart and come again,
For now his honour will not be disturb'd.

[EXIT Manuel *sulkily.*

De Mon. A stranger said'st thou?

(*Drops his handkerchief.*)

Jer. I did, good Sir, but he shall go away;
You shall not be disturb'd.

(*Stooping to lift the handkerchief.*)

You have dropp'd somewhat.

De Mon. (*preventing him.*) Nay, do not stoop, my friend! I pray thee not!
Thou art too old to stoop. —
I'm much indebted to thee. — Take this ring —
I love thee better than I seem to do.
I pray thee do it — thank me not. — What stranger?

Jer. A man who does most earnestly entreat
To see your honour; but I know him not.

De Mon. Then let him enter. [EXIT Jerome.

A pause. Enter CONRAD.

De Mon. You are the stranger who would speak with me?

Con. I am so far unfortunate, my Lord,
That, though my fortune on your favour hangs,
I am to you a stranger.

De Mon. How may this be? What can I do for you?

Con. Since thus your Lordship does so frankly ask,
The tiresome preface of apology
I will forbear, and tell my tale at once.—
In plodding drudgery I've spent my youth,
A careful penman in another's office;
And now, my master and employer dead,
They seek to set a stripling o'er my head,
And leave me on to drudge, e'en to old age,
Because I have no friend to take my part.
It is an office in your native town,
For I am come from thence, and I am told
You can procure it for me. Thus, my Lord,
From the repute of goodness which you bear,
I have presum'd to beg.

De Mon. They have befool'd thee with a false report.

Con. Alas! I see it is in vain to plead.
Your mind is prepossess'd against a wretch,
Who has, unfortunately for his weal,

Offended the revengeful Rezenvelt.

De Mon. What dost thou say?

Con. What I, perhaps, had better leave unsaid.
Who will believe my wrongs if I complain?
I am a stranger, Rezenvelt my foe,
Who will believe my wrongs?

De Mon. (*eagerly catching him by the coat.*)
I will believe them!
Though they were base as basest, vilest deeds,
In ancient record told, I would believe them!
Let not the smallest atom of unworthiness
That he has put upon thee be conceal'd.
Speak boldly, tell it all; for, by the light!
I'll be thy friend, I'll be thy warmest friend,
If he has done thee wrong.

Con. Nay, pardon me, it were not well advis'd,
If I should speak so freely of the man
Who will so soon your nearest kinsman be.

De Mon. What canst thou mean by this?

Con. That Marquis Rezenvelt
Has pledg'd his faith unto your noble sister,
And soon will be the husband of her choice.
So I am told, and so the world believes.

De Mon. 'Tis false! 'tis basely false!
What wretch could drop from his envenom'd tongue
A tale so damn'd?—It chokes my breath—
(*stamping with his foot.*) What wretch did tell it thee?

Con. Nay, every one with whom I have convers'd

Has held the same discourse. I judge it not.
But you, my Lord, who with the lady dwell,
You best can tell what her deportment speaks;
Whether her conduct and unguarded words
Belie such rumour.

(De Monfort *pauses, staggers backwards, and sinks into a chair; then starting up hastily.*)

De Mon. Where am I now? 'midst all the cursed thoughts,
That on my soul like stinging scorpions prey'd,
This never came before —— Oh, if it be!
The thought will drive me mad. — Was it for this
She urg'd her warm request on bended knee?
Alas! I wept, and thought of sister's love,
No damned love like this.
Fell devil! 'tis hell itself has lent thee aid
To work such sorcery! (*Pauses.*) I'll not believe it,
I must have proof clear as the noon-day sun
For such foul charge as this! Who waits without?

(*Paces up and down, furiously agitated.*)

Con. (*aside.*) What have I done? I've carried this too far.
I've rous'd a fierce ungovernable madman.

Enter JEROME.

De Mon. (*in a loud angry voice.*) Where did she go, at such an early hour,
And with such slight attendance?

Jer. Of whom inquires your honour?

De Mon. Why, of your lady. Said I not my sister?

Jer. The Lady Jane, your sister?

De Mon. (*in a faltering voice.*) Yes, I did call her so.

Jer. In truth, I cannot tell you where she went.
E'en now, from the short beechen walk hard-by,
I saw her through the garden-gate return.
The Marquis Rezenvelt, and Freberg's Countess,
Are in her company. This way they come,
As being nearer to the back apartments;
But I shall stop them if it be your will,
And bid them enter here.

De Mon. No, stop them not. I will remain unseen,
And mark them as they pass. Draw back a little.
(Conrad *seems alarmed, and steals off unnoticed.* De Monfort *grasps* Jerome *tightly by the hand, and drawing back with him two or three steps, not to be seen from the garden, waits in silence, with his eyes fixed on the glass door.*)

De Mon. I hear their footsteps on the grating sand:
How like the croaking of a carrion bird,
That hateful voice sounds to the distant ear!
And now she speaks — her voice sounds cheerly too —
Curs'd be their mirth! —
Now, now, they come; keep closer still! keep steady!
(*Taking hold of* Jerome *with both hands.*)

Jer. My lord, you tremble much.

De Mon. What, do I shake?

Jer. You do, in truth, and your teeth chatter too.

De Mon. See! see they come! he strutting by her side.

(Jane, Rezenvelt, *and* Countess Freberg *appear through the glass door, pursuing their way up a short walk leading to the other wing of the house.*)

See, his audacious face he turns to hers;
Utt'ring with confidence some nauseous jest.
And she endures it too — Oh! this looks vilely!
Ha! mark that courteous motion of his arm! —
What does he mean? — he dares not take her hand!
(*Pauses and looks eagerly.*) By heaven and hell he does!

(*Letting go his hold of* Jerome, *he throws out his hands vehemently, and thereby pushes him against the scene.*)

Jer. Oh! I am stunn'd! my head is crack'd in twain:
Your honour does forget how old I am.

De Mon. Well, well, the wall is harder than I wist.
Begone, and whine within.

[EXIT Jerome, *with a sad rueful countenance.*

(De Monfort *comes forward to the front of the stage, and makes a long pause, expressive of great agony of mind.*)

It must be so: each passing circumstance;
Her hasty journey here; her keen distress
Whene'er my soul's abhorrence I express'd;
Ay, and that damned reconciliation,
With tears extorted from me: Oh, too well!
All, all too well bespeak the shameful tale.
I should have thought of heaven and hell conjoin'd,
The morning star mix'd with infernal fire,
Ere I had thought of this —
Hell's blackest magic, in the midnight hour,
With horrid spells and incantation dire,
Such combination opposite, unseemly,
Of fair and loathsome, excellent and base,
Did ne'er produce — But every thing is possible,
So as it may my misery enhance!
Oh! I did love her with such pride of soul!
When other men, in gay pursuit of love,
Each beauty follow'd, by her side I stay'd;
Far prouder of a brother's station there,
Than all the favours favour'd lovers boast.
We quarrell'd once, and when I could no more
The alter'd coldness of her eye endure,
I slipp'd o'tip-toe to her chamber-door;
And when she ask'd who gently knock'd — Oh! oh!
Who could have thought of this?

(*Throws himself into a chair, covers his face with his hand, and bursts into tears. After some time, he starts up from his seat furiously.*)

Hell's direst torment seize the infernal villain!
Detested of my soul! I will have vengeance!

I'll crush thy swelling pride — I'll still thy vaunting —
I'll do a deed of blood! — Why shrink I thus?
If by some spell or magic sympathy,
Piercing the lifeless figure on that wall
Could pierce his bosom too, would I not cast it?
(*Throwing a dagger against the wall.*)
Shall groans and blood affright me? No, I'll do it.
Tho' gasping life beneath my pressure heav'd,
And my soul shudder'd at the horrid brink,
I would not flinch. — Fye, this recoiling nature!
O that his sever'd limbs were strew'd in air,
So as I saw it not!

(*Enter* Rezenvelt *behind from the glass door.* De Monfort *turns round, and on seeing him starts back, then drawing his sword, rushes furiously upon him.*)

Detested robber! now all forms are over;
Now open villainy, now open hate!
Defend thy life!

Rez. De Monfort, thou art mad.

De Mon. Speak not, but draw. Now for thy hated life!

(*They fight:* Rezenvelt *parries his thrusts with great skill, and at last disarms him.*)

Then take my life, black fiend, for hell assists thee.

Rez. No, Monfort, but I'll take away your sword,
Not as a mark of disrespect to you,
But for your safety. By to-morrow's eve

I'll call on you myself and give it back;
And then, if I am charg'd with any wrong,
I'll justify myself. Farewell, strange man!
[EXIT.

(De Monfort *stands for some time quite motionless, like one stupified. Enters to him a* SERVANT: *he starts.*)

De Mon. Ha! who art thou?
Ser. 'Tis I, an' please your honour.
De Mon. (*staring wildly at him.*) Who art thou?
Ser. Your servant Jacques.
De Mon. Indeed I knew thee not.
Leave me, and when Rezenvelt is gone,
Return and let me know.
Ser. He's gone already.
De Mon. How! is he gone so soon?
Ser. His servant told me,
He was in haste to go; as night comes on,
And at the evening hour he purposes
To visit some old friend, whose lonely mansion
Stands a short mile beyond the farther wood,
In which a convent is of holy Nuns
Who chaunt this night a requiem to the soul
Of a departed sister. For so well
He loves such solemn music, he has order'd
His horses onward by the usual road,
Meaning on foot to cross the wood alone.
So says his knave. Good may it do him, sooth!
I would not walk thro' those wild dells alone
For all his wealth. For there, as I have heard,
Foul murders have been done, and ravens scream;

And things unearthly, stalking thro' the night,
Have scar'd the lonely trav'ller from his wits.
(De Monfort *stands fixed in thought.*)
I've ta'en your mare, an' please you, from her field,
And wait your farther orders.
(De Monfort *heeds him not.*)
Her hoofs are sound, and where the saddle gall'd,
Begins to mend. What further must be done?
(De Monfort *still heeds him not.*)
His honour heeds me not. Why should I stay?
De Mon. (*eagerly, as he is going.*) He goes alone, saidst thou?
Ser. His servant told me so.
De Mon. And at what hour?
Ser. He 'parts from Amberg by the fall of eve.
Save you, my Lord! how chang'd your count'-nance is!
Are you not well?
De Mon. Yes, I am well: begone,
And wait my orders by the city wall:
I'll that way bend, and speak to thee again.
[EXIT Servant.
(De Monfort *walks rapidly two or three times across the stage; then seizes his dagger from the wall, looks steadfastly at its point, and* EXIT *hastily.*)

SCENE III.

Moonlight. A wild path in a wood, shaded with trees. Enter DE MONFORT, *with a strong expression of disquiet, mixed with fear, upon his face, looking behind him, and bending his ear to the ground, as if he listened to something.*

De Mon. How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!
Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds
As tho' some heavy footstep follow'd me.
I will advance no farther.
Deep settled shadows rest across the path,
And thickly-tangled boughs o'erhang this spot.
O that a tenfold gloom did cover it!
That midst the murky darkness I might strike;
As in the wild confusion of a dream,
Things horrid, bloody, terrible do pass,
As tho' they pass'd not; nor impress the mind
With the fix'd clearness of reality.
(*An owl is heard screaming near him.*)
(*Starting*) What sound is that?
(*Listens, and the owl cries again.*
It is the screech-owl's cry.
Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?
Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horror?
I've heard of this. (*Pauses and listens.*)
How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,
With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
Did utter secret things?

The distant river too, bears to mine ear
A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!
Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.
A distant gath'ring blast sounds thro' the wood,
And dark clouds fleetly hasten o'er the sky:
O! that a storm would rise, a raging storm;
Amidst the roar of warring elements
I'd lift my hand and strike! but this pale light,
The calm distinctness of each stilly thing,
Is terrible. (*Starting*) Footsteps are near —
He comes! he comes! I'll watch him farther on —
I cannot do it here. [EXIT.

Enter REZENVELT, *and continues his way slowly from the bottom of the stage: as he advances to the front, the owl screams, he stops and listens, and the owl screams again.*

Rez. Ha! does the night-bird greet me on my way?
How much his hooting is in harmony
With such a scene as this! I like it well.
Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,
I've leant my back against some knotted oak,
And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call
He answer would return, and, thro' the gloom,
We friendly converse held.
Between me and the star-bespangled sky,
Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,
And thro' them looks the pale and placid moon.
How like a crocodile, or winged snake,
Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length!

And now transformed by the passing wind,
Methinks it seems a flying Pegasus.
Ay, but a shapeless band of blacker hue
Come swiftly after. —
A hollow murm'ring wind sounds thro' the trees;
I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.
I must not linger here —
(*A bell heard at some distance.*)
The convent bell.
'Tis distant still: it tells their hour of prayer.
It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze,
That, to a fearful superstitious mind,
In such a scene, would like a death-knell come.
[EXIT.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — *The inside of a Convent Chapel, of old Gothick architecture, almost dark: two torches only are seen at a distance, burning over a newly covered* grave. Lightning is seen flashing through the windows, and thunder heard, with the sound of wind beating upon the building. Enter two* MONKS.

1*st Monk.* The storm increases: hark how dismally
It howls along the cloisters. How goes time?

* I have put above *newly-covered* instead of *new-made* grave, as it stands in the former editions, because I wish not to give the idea of a funeral procession, but merely that of a hymn or requiem sung over the grave of a person who has been recently buried.

2d Monk. It is the hour: I hear them near at hand:
And when the solemn requiem has been sung
For the departed sister, we'll retire.
Yet, should this tempest still more violent grow,
We'll beg a friendly shelter till the morn.

1st Monk. See, the procession enters: let us join

(*The organ strikes up a solemn prelude. Enter a procession of* Nuns, *with the* Abbess, *bearing torches. After compassing the grave twice, and remaining there some time, the organ plays a grand dirge, whilst they stand round the grave.*)

SONG BY THE NUNS.

Departed soul, whose poor remains
This hallow'd lowly grave contains;
Whose passing storm of life is o'er,
Whose pains and sorrows are no more;
Bless'd be thou with the bless'd above!
Where all is joy, and purity, and love.

Let HIM, in might and mercy dread,
Lord of the living and the dead;
In whom the stars of heav'n rejoice,
And the ocean lifts its voice;
Thy spirit, purified, to glory raise,
To sing with holy saints his everlasting praise!

Departed soul, who in this earthly scene
Hast our lowly sister been,
Swift be thy way to where the blessed dwell!
Until we meet thee there, farewell! farewell!

Enter a young Pensioner, *with a wild terrified look, her hair and dress all scattered, and rushes forward amongst them.*

Abb. Why com'st thou here, with such disorder'd looks,
To break upon our sad solemnity?

Pen. Oh! I did hear thro' the receding blast,
Such horrid cries! they made my blood run chill.

Abb. 'Tis but the varied voices of the storm,
Which many times will sound like distant screams:
It has deceiv'd thee.

Pen. O no, for twice it call'd, so loudly call'd,
With horrid strength, beyond the pitch of nature;
And Murder! murder! was the dreadful cry.
A third time it return'd with feeble strength,
But o'the sudden ceas'd, as tho' the words
Were smother'd rudely in the grappled throat,
And all was still again, save the wild blast
Which at a distance growl'd. —
Oh! it will never from my mind depart!
That dreadful cry, all i'the instant still'd:
For then, so near, some horrid deed was done,
And none to rescue.

Abb. Where didst thou hear it?

Pen. In the higher cells,
As now a window, open'd by the storm,
I did attempt to close.

1*st Monk.* I wish our brother Bernard were arriv'd;
He is upon his way.

Abb. Be not alarm'd; it still may be deception.
'Tis meet we finish our solemnity,
Nor show neglect unto the honour'd dead.
(*Gives a sign, and the organ plays again: just as it ceases, a loud knocking is heard without.*)
Abb. Ha! who may this be? hush!
(*Knocking heard again.*)
2d Monk. It is the knock of one in furious haste.
Hush! hush! What footsteps come? Ha! brother Bernard.

Enter BERNARD *bearing a lantern.*

1*st Monk.* See, what a look he wears of stiffen'd fear!
Where hast thou been, good brother?
Bern. I've seen a horrid sight!
(*All gathering round him and speaking at once.*)
What hast thou seen?
Bern. As on I hasten'd, bearing thus my light,
Across the path, not fifty paces off,
I saw a murder'd corse, stretch'd on his back,
Smear'd with new blood, as tho' but newly slain.
Abb. A man or woman was't?
Bern. A man, a man!
Abb. Didst thou examine if within its breast
There yet were lodg'd some small remains of life?
Was it quite dead?
Bern. Nought in the grave is deader.
I look'd but once, yet life did never lodge
In any form so laid. —

A chilly horror seiz'd me, and I fled.

1*st Monk.* And does the face seem all unknown to thee?

Bern. The face! I would not on the face have look'd
For e'en a kingdom's wealth, for all the world!
O no! the bloody neck, the bloody neck!

(*Shaking his head and shuddering with horror. Loud knocking heard without.*)

Sist. Good mercy! who comes next?

Bern. Not far behind
I left our brother Thomas on the road;
But then he did repent him as he went,
And threatened to return.

2d Monk. See, here he comes.

Enter Brother THOMAS, *with a wild terrified look.*

1*st Monk.* How wild he looks!

Bern. (*going up to him eagerly.*) What, hast thou seen it too?

Thom. Yes, yes! it glared upon me as it pass'd.

Bern. What glared upon thee?

(*All gathering round* Thomas, *and speaking at once.*) O! what hast thou seen?

Thom. As, striving with the blast, I onward came,
Turning my feeble lantern from the wind,
Its light upon a dreadful visage gleam'd,
Which paus'd and look'd upon me as it pass'd,
But such a look, such wildness of despair,

Such horror-strained features, never yet
Did earthly visage show. I shrunk and shudder'd.
If a damn'd spirit may to earth return,
I've seen it.

Bern. Was there any blood upon it?

Thom. Nay, as it pass'd, I did not see its form;
Nought but the horrid face.

Bern. It is the murderer.

1*st Monk.* What way went it?

Thom. I durst not look till I had pass'd it far.
Then turning round, upon the rising bank,
I saw, between me and the paly sky,
A dusky form, tossing and agitated.
I stopp'd to mark it; but, in truth, I found
'Twas but a sapling bending to the wind,
And so I onward hied, and look'd no more.

1*st Monk.* But we must look to't; we must follow it:
Our duty so commands. (*To 2d* Monk.) Will you go, brother?
(*To* Bernard.) And you, good Bernard?

Bern. If I needs must go.

1*st Monk.* Come, we must all go.

Abb. Heaven be with you, then!

[EXEUNT Monks.

Pen. Amen! amen! Good heaven be with us all!
O what a dreadful night!

Abb. Daughters, retire; peace to the peaceful dead!
Our solemn ceremony now is finish'd.

[EXEUNT.

SCENE II.

A large Room in the Convent, very dark. Enter the ABBESS, Young Pensioner *bearing a light, and several* Nuns; *she sets down the light on a table at the bottom of the stage, so that the room is still very gloomy.*

Abb. They have been longer absent than I thought;
I fear he has escap'd them.
1st Nun. Heaven forbid!
Pen. No, no, found out foul murder ever is,
And the foul murd'rer too.
2d Nun. The good Saint Francis will direct their search;
The blood so near this holy convent shed
For threefold vengeance calls.
Abb. I hear a noise within the inner court —
They are return'd; (*listening.*) and Bernard's voice I hear:
They are return'd.
Pen. Why do I tremble so?
It is not I who ought to tremble thus.
2d Nun. I hear them at the door.
Bern. (*without.*) Open the door, I pray thee, brother Thomas;
I cannot now unhand the prisoner.
(*All speak together, shrinking back from the door, and staring upon one another.*) He is with them!

(*A folding door at the bottom of the stage is opened, and enter* Bernard, Thomas, *and the other two* Monks, *carrying lanterns in their hands, and bringing in* De Monfort. *They are likewise followed by other* Monks. *As they lead forward* De Monfort, *the light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely; but when they come to the front of the stage, they turn the light side of their lanterns on him at once, and his face is seen in all the strengthened horrour of despair, with his hands and clothes bloody.*)

(Abbess *and* Nuns *speak at once, and start back.*)

Holy saints be with us!

Bern. (*to Abb.*) Behold the man of blood!

Abb. Of misery too; I cannot look upon him.

Bern. (*to Nuns.*) Nay, holy sisters, turn not thus away.

Speak to him, if, perchance, he will regard you:
For from his mouth we have no utt'rance heard,
Save one deep groan and smother'd exclamation,
When first we seiz'd him.

Abb. (*to* De Mon.) Most miserable man, how art thou thus? (*Pauses.*)

Thy tongue is silent, but those bloody hands
Do witness horrid things. What is thy name?

De Mon. (*roused, looks steadfastly at the* Abbess *for some time, then speaking in a short hurried voice.*) I have no name.

Abb. (*to* Bern.) Do it thyself; I'll speak to him no more.

Pen. O holy saints! that this should be the man
Who did against his fellow lift the stroke,
Whilst he so loudly call'd. —
Still in my ears it rings: O murder! murder!

De Mon. (*starting.*) He calls again!

Pen. No, he did call, but now his voice is still'd.
'Tis past.

De Mon. 'Tis past.

Pen. Yes, it is past! art thou not he who did it?

(De Monfort *utters a deep groan, and is supported from falling by the* Monks. *A noise is heard without.*)

Abb. What noise is this of heavy lumb'ring steps,
Like men who with a weighty burden come?

Bern. It is the body: I have orders given
That here it should be laid.

(*Enter men bearing the body of* Rezenvelt, *covered with a white cloth, and set it down in the middle of the room: they then uncover it.* De Monfort *stands fixed and motionless with horror, only that a sudden shivering seems to pass over him when they uncover the corpse. The* Abbess *and* Nuns *shrink back and retire to some distance, all the rest fixing their eyes steadfastly upon* De Monfort. *A long pause.*)

Bern. (*to* De Mon.) See'st thou that lifeless corpse, those bloody wounds?
See how he lies, who but so shortly since
A living creature was, with all the powers
Of sense, and motion, and humanity!

Oh! what a heart had he who did this deed!

1st Monk. (*looking at the body.*) How hard those teeth against the lips are press'd,
As though he struggled still!

2d Monk. The hands, too, clench'd: the last efforts of nature.

(De Monfort *still stands motionless. Brother* Thomas *then goes to the body, and raising up the head a little, turns it towards* De Monfort.)

Thom. Know'st thou this ghastly face?

De Mon. (*putting his hands before his face in violent perturbation.*) Oh, do not! do not! Veil it from my sight!
Put me to any agony but this!

Thom. Ha! dost thou then confess the dreadful deed?
Hast thou against the laws of awful heav'n
Such horrid murder done? What fiend could tempt thee?

(*Pauses, and looks steadfastly at* De Monfort.)

De Mon. I hear thy words, but do not hear their sense —
Hast thou not cover'd it?

Bern. (*to* Thom.) Forbear, my brother, for thou see'st right well
He is not in a state to answer thee.
Let us retire and leave him for a while.
These windows are with iron grated o'er;
He is secur'd, and other duty calls.

Thom. Then let it be.

Bern. (*to* Monks, *&c.*) Come, let us all depart.
(EXEUNT Abbess *and* Nuns, *followed by the* Monks. *One* Monk *lingering a little behind.*)

De Mon. All gone! (*Perceiving the* Monk.) O stay thou here!

Monk. It must not be.

De Mon. I'll give thee gold; I'll make thee rich in gold,
If thou wilt stay e'en but a little while.

Monk. I must not, must not stay.

De Mon. I do conjure thee!

Monk. I dare not stay with thee. (*Going.*)

De Mon. And wilt thou go?
(*Catching hold of him eagerly.*)
O! throw thy cloak upon this grizly form!
The unclos'd eyes do stare upon me still.
O do not leave me thus!

[Monk *covers the body, and* Exit.

De Mon. (*alone, looking at the covered body, but at a distance.*) Alone with thee! but thou art nothing now.
'Tis done, 'tis number'd with the things o'erpast;
Would! would it were to come! —
What fated end, what darkly gathering cloud
Will close on all this horrour?
O that dire madness would unloose my thoughts,
And fill my mind with wildest fantasies,
Dark, restless, terrible! aught, aught but this!
(*Pauses and shudders.*)
How with convulsive life he heav'd beneath me,

E'en with the death's wound gor'd! O horrid, horrid!
Methinks I feel him still. — What sound is that?
I heard a smother'd groan. — It is impossible!
(*Looking steadfastly at the body.*)
It moves! it moves! the cloth doth heave and swell.
It moves again! I cannot suffer this —
Whate'er it be, I will uncover it.
(*Runs to the corpse, and tears off the cloth in despair.*)
All still beneath.
Nought is there here but fix'd and grizly death,
How sternly fixed! Oh! those glazed eyes!
They look upon me still.
(*Shrinks back with horrour.*)
Come, madness! come unto me, senseless death!
I cannot suffer this! Here, rocky wall,
Scatter these brains, or dull them!
(*Runs furiously, and, dashing his head against the wall, falls upon the floor.*)

Enter two MONKS *hastily.*

1*st Monk.* See; wretched man, he hath destroy'd himself.

2*d Monk.* He does but faint. Let us remove him hence.

1*st Monk.* We did not well to leave him here alone.

2*d Monk.* Come, let us bear him to the open air.

[EXEUNT, *bearing out* De Monfort.

SCENE III.

Before the gates of the Convent. Enter JANE DE MONFORT, FREBERG, *and* MANUEL. *As they are proceeding towards the gate,* JANE *stops short and shrinks back.*

Freb. Ha! wherefore? has a sudden illness seiz'd thee?

Jane. No, no, my friend. — And yet I'm very faint —
I dread to enter here.

Man. Ay, so I thought:
For, when between the trees, that abbey tower
First shew'd its top, I saw your count'nance change.
But breathe a little here: I'll go before,
And make enquiry at the nearest gate.

Freb. Do so, good Manuel.

(Manuel *goes and knocks at the gate.*)
Courage, dear Madam: all may yet be well.
Rezenvelt's servant, frighten'd with the storm,
And seeing that his master join'd him not,
As by appointment, at the forest's edge,
Might be alarm'd, and give too ready ear
To an unfounded rumour.
He saw it not; he came not here himself.

Jane. (*looking eagerly to the gate, where* Manuel *talks with the Porter.*) Ha! see, he talks with some one earnestly.

And see'st thou not that motion of his hands?
He stands like one who hears a horrid tale.
Almighty God!

(Manuel *goes into the convent.*)

He comes not back; he enters.

Freb. Bear up, my noble friend.

Jane. I will, I will! But this suspense is dreadful.

(*A long pause.* Manuel *re-enters from the convent, and comes forward slowly with a sad countenance.*)

Is this the face of one who bears good tidings?
O God! his face doth tell the horrid fact?
There is nought doubtful here.

Freb. How is it, Manuel?

Man. I've seen him through a crevice in his door:
It is indeed my master.

(*Bursting into tears.*)

(Jane *faints, and is supported by* Freberg.—*Enter* Abbess *and several* Nuns *from the convent, who gather about her, and apply remedies. She recovers.*)

1*st Nun.* The life returns again.

2*d Nun.* Yes, she revives.

Abb. (*to* Freb.) Let me entreat this noble lady's leave
To lead her in. She seems in great distress:
We would with holy kindness soothe her woe,
And do by her the deeds of christian love.

Freb. Madam, your goodness has my grateful thanks.

[EXEUNT, *supporting* JANE *into the convent.*

SCENE IV.

De Monfort *is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture. He remains so for some time. His face afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one whose mind is harrowed with the severest thoughts; then, starting from his seat, he clasps his hands together, and holds them up to heaven.*

De Mon. O that I ne'er had known the light of day!
That filmy darkness on mine eyes had hung,
And clos'd me out from the fair face of nature!
O that my mind in mental darkness pent,
Had no perception, no distinction known,
Of fair, or foul, perfection, or defect,
Nor thought conceiv'd of proud pre-eminence!
O that it had! O that I had been form'd
An idiot from the birth! a senseless changeling,
Who eats his glutton's meal with greedy haste,
Nor knows the hand who feeds him. —
(*Pauses; then, in a calmer sorrowful voice.*)
What am I now? how ends the day of life?
For end it must; and terrible this gloom,
This storm of horrours that surrounds its close.
This little term of nature's agony
Will soon be o'er, and what is past is past:
But shall I then, on the dark lap of earth
Lay me to rest, in still unconsciousness,

Like senseless clod that doth no pressure feel
From wearing foot of daily passenger;
Like steeped rock o'er which the breaking waves
Bellow and foam unheard? O would I could!

Enter MANUEL, *who springs forward to his master, but is checked upon perceiving* De Monfort *draw back and look sternly at him.*

Man. My lord, my master! O my dearest master!

(De Monfort *still looks at him without speaking.*)

Nay, do not thus regard me, good my Lord!
Speak to me: am I not your faithful Manuel?

De Mon. (*in a hasty broken voice.*) Art thou alone?

Man. No, Sir, the lady Jane is on her way;
She is not far behind.

De Mon. (*tossing his arm over his head in an agony.*) This is too much! All I can bear but this!

It must not be. — Run and prevent her coming.
Say, he who is detain'd a pris'ner here
Is one to her unknown. I now am nothing.
I am a man of holy claims bereft;
Out of the pale of social kindred cast;
Nameless and horrible. —
Tell her De Monfort far from hence is gone
Into a desolate and distant land,
Ne'er to return again. Fly, tell her this;
For we must meet no more.

Enter JANE DE MONFORT, *bursting into the chamber, and followed by* FREBERG, ABBESS, *and several* NUNS.

Jane. We must! we must! My brother, O my brother?

(De Monfort *turns away his head and hides his face with his arm.* Jane *stops short, and, making a great effort, turns to* Freberg, *and the others who followed her, and with an air of dignity stretches out her hand, beckoning them to retire. All retire but* Freberg, *who seems to hesitate.*)

And thou too, Freberg: call it not unkind.

[EXIT Freberg, Jane *and* De Monfort *only remain.*

Jane. My hapless Monfort!

(De Monfort *turns round and looks sorrowfully upon her; she opens her arms to him, and he, rushing into them, hides his face upon her breast, and weeps.*)

Jane. Ay, give thy sorrow vent; here may'st thou weep.

De Mon. (*in broken accents.*) Oh! this, my sister, makes me feel again

The kindness of affection.

My mind has in a dreadful storm been tost;

Horrid and dark.—I thought to weep no more.—

I've done a deed — But I am human still.

Jane. I know thy suff'rings: leave thy sorrow free!

Thou art with one who never did upbraid;
Who mourns, who loves thee still.
De Mon. Ah! say'st thou so? no, no; it should not be.
(*Shrinking from her.*) I am a foul and bloody murderer,
For such embrace unmeet: O leave me! leave me!
Disgrace and public shame abide me now;
And all, alas! who do my kindred own,
The direful portion share. — Away, away!
Shall a disgrac'd and public criminal
Degrade thy name, and claim affinity
To noble worth like thine?—I have no name—
I'm nothing now, not e'en to thee; depart.
(*She takes his hand, and grasping it firmly, speaks with a determined voice.*)
Jane. De Monfort, hand in hand we have enjoy'd
The playful term of infancy together;
And in the rougher path of ripen'd years
We've been each other's stay. Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fix'd and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house;
In the terrific face of armed law;
Yea, on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee.
De Mon. (*looking at her with admiration.*)
Heav'n bless thy gen'rous soul, my noble Jane!
I thought to sink beneath this load of ill,

Depress'd with infamy and open shame;
I thought to sink in abject wretchedness:
But for thy sake I'll rouse my manhood up,
And meet it bravely; no unseemly weakness,
I feel my rising strength, shall blot my end,
To clothe thy cheek with shame.

Jane. Yes, thou art noble still.

De Mon. With thee I am; who were not so with thee?

But, ah! my sister, short will be the term:
Death's stroke will come, and in that state beyond,
Where things unutterable wait the soul,
New from its earthly tenement discharg'd,
We shall be sever'd far.
Far as the spotless purity of virtue
Is from the murd'rer's guilt, far shall we be.
This is the gulf of dread uncertainty
From which the soul recoils.

Jane. The God who made thee is a God of mercy;
Think upon this.

De Mon. (*shaking his head.*) No, no! this blood! this blood!

Jane. Yes, e'en the sin of blood may be forgiven,
When humble penitence hath once aton'd.

De Mon. (*eagerly.*) What, after terms of lengthen'd misery,
Imprison'd anguish of tormented spirits,
Shall I again, a renovated soul,
Into the blessed family of the good
Admittance have? Think'st thou that this may be?

Speak if thou canst: O speak me comfort here!
For dreadful fancies, like an armed host,
Have push'd me to despair. It is most horrible—
O speak of hope! if any hope there be.

(Jane *is silent, and looks sorrowfully upon him; then clasping her hands, and turning her eyes to heaven, seems to mutter a prayer.*)

De Mon. Ha! dost thou pray for me? heav'n hear thy prayer!
I fain would kneel.— Alas! I dare not do it.

Jane. Not so! all by th' Almighty Father form'd,
May in their deepest mis'ry call on him.
Come kneel with me, my brother.

(*She kneels and prays to herself; he kneels by her, and clasps his hands fervently, but speaks not. A noise of chains clanking is heard without, and they both rise.*)

De Mon. Hear'st thou that noise? They come to interrupt us.

Jane. (*moving towards a side-door*). Then let us enter here.

De Mon. (*catching hold of her with a look of horror.*) Not there — not there — the corpse — the bloody corpse!

Jane. What, lies he there? — Unhappy Rezenvelt?

De Mon. A sudden thought has come across my mind;
How came it not before? Unhappy Rezenvelt!
Say'st thou but this?

Jane. What should I say? he was an honest man;
I still have thought him such, as such lament him.
(De Monfort *utters a deep groan.*)
What means this heavy groan?
De Mon. It hath a meaning.

Enter ABBESS *and* MONKS, *with two* OFFICERS *of justice carrying fetters in their hands to put upon* DE MONFORT.

Jane. (*starting.*) What men are these?
1*st Off.* Lady, we are the servants of the law,
And bear with us a power, which doth constrain
To bind with fetters this our prisoner.
(*Pointing to* De Monfort.)
Jane. A stranger uncondemn'd? this cannot be.
1*st Off.* As yet, indeed, he is by law unjudg'd,
But is so far condemn'd by circumstance,
That law, or custom sacred held as law,
Doth fully warrant us, and it must be.
Jane. Nay, say not so; he has no power t'escape:
Distress hath bound him with a heavy chain;
There is no need of yours.
1*st Off.* We must perform our office.
Jane. O! do not offer this indignity!
1*st Off.* Is it indignity in sacred law
To bind a murderer? (*To 2d* Officer.) Come, do thy work.
Jane. Harsh are thy words, and stern thy harden'd brow;

Dark is thine eye; but all some pity have
Unto the last extreme of misery.
I do beseech thee! if thou art a man —
(*Kneeling to him.*)
(De Monfort, *roused at this, runs up to* Jane, *and raises her hastily from the ground: then stretches himself up proudly.*)
De Mon. (*to* Jane.) Stand thou erect in native dignity;
And bend to none on earth the suppliant knee,
Though cloth'd in power imperial. To my heart
It gives a feller gripe than many irons.
(*Holding out his hands.*) Here, officers of law, bind on those shackles;
And, if they are too light, bring heavier chains.
Add iron to iron; load, crush me to the ground:
Nay, heap ten thousand weight upon my breast,
For that were best of all.
(*A long pause, whilst they put irons upon him. After they are on,* Jane *looks at him sorrowfully, and lets her head sink on her breast.* De Monfort *stretches out his hand, looks at them, and then at* Jane; *crosses them over his breast, and endeavours to suppress his feelings.**)

* Should this play ever again be acted, perhaps it would be better that the curtain should drop here; since here the story may be considered as completed, and what comes after, prolongs the piece too much when our interest for the fate of De Monfort is at an end.

1st Off. I have it, too, in charge to move you
hence, (*To* De Monfort.)
Into another chamber more secure.
De Mon. Well, I am ready, Sir.
(*Approaching* Jane, *whom the* Abbess *is endeavouring to comfort, but to no purpose.*)
Ah! wherefore thus! most honoured and most dear?
Shrink not at the accoutrements of ill,
Daring the thing itself.
(*Endeavouring to look cheerful.*)
Wilt thou permit me with a gyved hand?
(*She gives him her hand, which he raises to his lips.*)
This was my proudest office.
[EXEUNT, De Monfort *leading out* Jane.

SCENE V.

An Apartment in the Convent, opening into another room, whose low arched door is seen in the bottom of the stage. In one corner a Monk is seen kneeling. Enter another Monk, who, on perceiving him, stops till he rises from his knees, and then goes eagerly up to him.

1st Monk. How is the prisoner?
2d Monk. (*pointing to the door.*) He is within,
and the strong hand of death
Is dealing with him.
1st Monk. How is this, good brother?
Methought he brav'd it with a manly spirit;

And led, with shackled hands, his sister forth,
Like one resolv'd to bear misfortune bravely.
2d Monk. Yes, with heroick courage, for a while
He seem'd inspir'd; but soon depress'd again,
Remorse and dark despair o'erwhelm'd his soul:
And, from the violent working of his mind,
Some stream of life within his breast has burst;
For many a time, within a little space,
The ruddy tide has rush'd into his mouth.
God grant his pains be short!
1st Monk. How does the lady?
2d Monk. She sits and bears his head upon her lap,
Wiping the cold drops from his ghastly face
With such a look of tender wretchedness,
It wrings the heart to see her.
How goes the night?
1st Monk. It wears, methinks, upon the midnight hour.
It is a dark and fearful night; the moon
Is wrapp'd in sable clouds; the chill blast sounds
Like dismal lamentations. Ay, who knows
What voices mix with the dark midnight winds?
Nay, as I pass'd that yawning cavern's mouth,
A whisp'ring sound, unearthly, reach'd my ear,
And o'er my head a chilly coldness crept.
Are there not wicked fiends and damned sprites,
Whom yawning charnels, and th' unfathom'd depths
Of secret darkness, at this fearful hour,
Do upwards send, to watch, unseen, around

The murd'rer's death-bed, at his fatal term,
Ready to hail with dire and horrid welcome,
Their future mate? — I do believe there are.

2d Monk. Peace, peace! a God of wisdom and of mercy,
Veils from our sight — Ha! hear that heavy groan. (*A groan heard within.*)

1st Monk. It is the dying man. (*Another groan.*)

2d Monk. God grant him rest!
(*Listening at the door.*)
I hear him struggling in the gripe of death.
O piteous heaven! (*Goes from the door.*)

Enter Brother THOMAS *from the chamber.*

How now, good Brother?

Thom. Retire, my friends. O many a bed of death
With all its pangs and horrours I have seen,
But never aught like this! Retire, my friends;
The death-bell will its awful signal give,
When he has breath'd his last.
I would move hence, but I am weak and faint:
Let me a moment on thy shoulder lean.
Oh, weak and mortal man!
(*Leans on 2d Monk: a pause.*)

Enter BERNARD *from the chamber.*

2d Monk. (*to* Bern.) How is your penitent?

Bern. He is with HIM who made him; HIM, who knows
The soul of man: before whose awful presence
Th' unsceptred tyrant simple, helpless, stands
Like an unclothed babe. (*Bell tolls.*)

The dismal sound!
Retire, and pray for the blood-stained soul:
May heav'n have mercy on him! (*Bell tolls again.*)
[EXEUNT.

SCENE VI.

A Hall or large Room in the Convent. The bodies of DE MONFORT *and* REZENVELT *are discovered laid out upon a low table or platform, covered with black.* FREBERG, BERNARD, ABBESS, Monks *and* Nuns *attending.*

Abb. (*to* Freb.) Here must they lie, my Lord, until we know
Respecting this the order of the law.
Freb. And you have wisely done, my rev'rend mother.
(*Goes to the table, and looks at the bodies, but without uncovering them.*)
Unhappy men! ye, both in nature rich,
With talents and with virtues were endued.
Ye should have lov'd, yet deadly rancour came,
And in the prime and manhood of your days
Ye sleep in horrid death. O direful hate!
What shame and wretchedness his portion is,
Who, for a secret inmate, harbours thee!
And who shall call him blameless, who excites,
Ungen'rously excites, with careless scorn,
Such baleful passion in a brother's breast,
Whom heav'n commands to love? Low are ye laid:

Still all contention now. — Low are ye laid:
I lov'd you both, and mourn your hapless fall.
Abb. They were your friends, my Lord?
Freb. I lov'd them both. How does the Lady Jane?
Abb. She bears misfortune with intrepid soul.
I never saw in woman bow'd with grief,
Such moving dignity.
Freb. Ay, still the same.
I've known her long: of worth most excellent;
But in the day of woe, she ever rose
Upon the mind with added majesty,
As the dark mountain more sublimely tow'rs
Mantled in clouds and storm.

Enter MANUEL *and* JEROME.

Man. (*pointing.*) Here, my good Jerome, here's a piteous sight.
Jer. A piteous sight! yet I will look upon him:
I'll see his face in death. Alas, alas!
I've seen him move a noble gentleman!
And when with vexing passion undisturb'd,
He look'd most graciously.
(*Lifts up in mistake the cloth from the body of* Rezenvelt, *and starts back with horrour.*)
Oh! this was the bloody work! Oh! oh, oh, oh!
That human hands could do it!
(*Drops the cloth again.*)
Man. That is the murder'd corpse; here lies De Monfort.
(*Going to uncover the other body.*)

Jer. (*turning away his head.*) No, no! I cannot look upon him now.

Man. Didst thou not come to see him?

Jer. Fy! cover him — inter him in the dark — Let no one look upon him.

Bern. (*To* Jer.) Well dost thou shew the abhorrence nature feels
For deeds of blood, and I commend thee well.
In the most ruthless heart compassion wakes
For one, who, from the hand of fellow man,
Hath felt such cruelty.

(*Uncovering the body of* Rezenvelt.)
This is the murder'd corse:

(*Uncovering the body of* De Monfort.)
But see, I pray!
Here lies the murderer. What think'st thou here?
Look on those features, thou hast seen them oft,
With the last dreadful conflict of despair,
So fix'd in horrid strength.
See those knit brows; those hollow sunken eyes;
The sharpen'd nose, with nostrils all distent;
That writhed mouth, where yet the teeth appear,
In agony, to gnash the nether lip.
Think'st thou, less painful than the murd'rer's knife
Was such a death as this?
Ay, and how changed too those matted locks!

Jer. Merciful heaven! his hair is grisly grown,
Chang'd to white age, that was, but two days since,
Black as the raven's plume. How may this be?

Bern. Such change, from violent conflict of the mind,
Will sometimes come.
Jer. Alas, alas! most wretched!
Thou wert too good to do a cruel deed,
And so it kill'd thee. Thou hast suffer'd for it.
God rest thy soul! I needs must touch thy hand,
And bid thee long farewell.
(*Laying his hand on* De Monfort.)
Bern. Draw back, draw back: see where the lady comes.

Enter Jane De Monfort. Freberg, *who has been for some time retired by himself to the bottom of the stage, now steps forward to lead her in, but checks himself on seeing the fixed sorrow of her countenance, and draws back respectfully.* Jane *advances to the table, and looks attentively at the covered bodies.* Manuel *points out the body of* De Monfort, *and she gives a gentle inclination of the head, to signify that she understands him. She then bends tenderly over it, without speaking.*

Man. (*to* Jane, *as she raises her head.*) Oh, madam! my good lord.
Jane. Well says thy love, my good and faithful Manuel:
But we must mourn in silence.
Man. Alas! the times that I have followed him!
Jane. Forbear, my faithful Manuel. For this love
Thou hast my grateful thanks; and here's my hand:

Thou hast lov'd him, and I'll remember thee.
Where'er I am ; in what'er spot of earth
I linger out the remnant of my days,
I will remember thee.

Man. Nay, by the living God! where'er you are,
There will I be. I'll prove a trusty servant:
I'll follow you, even to the world's end.
My master's gone ; and I indeed am mean,
Yet will I shew the strength of nobler men,
Should any dare upon your honour'd worth
To put the slightest wrong. Leave you, dear lady!
Kill me, but say not this!

(*Throwing himself at her feet.*)

Jane. (*raising him.*) Well, then! be thou my servant, and my friend.
Art thou, good Jerome, too, in kindness come?
I see thou art. How goes it with thine age?

Jer. Ah, Madam! woe and weakness dwell with age:
Would I could serve you with a young man's strength!
I'd spend my life for you.

Jane. Thanks, worthy Jerome.
O! who hath said, the wretched have no friends?

Freb. In every sensible and gen'rous breast
Affliction finds a friend ; but unto thee,
Thou most exalted and most honourable,
The heart in warmest adoration bows,
And even a worship pays.

Jane. Nay, Freberg, Freberg! grieve me not, my friend.
He, to whose ear my praise most welcome was,
Hears it no more; and, oh, our piteous lot!
What tongue will talk of him? Alas, alas!
This more than all will bow me to the earth;
I feel my misery here.
The voice of praise was wont to name us both:
I had no greater pride.

(*Covers her face with her hands, and bursts into tears. Here they all hang about her:* Freberg *supporting her tenderly,* Manuel *embracing her knees, and old* Jerome *catching hold of her robe affectionately.* Bernard, Abbess, Monks, *and* Nuns, *likewise, gather round her, with looks of sympathy.*)

Enter two Officers *of law.*

1*st Off.* Where is the prisoner?
Into our hands he straight must be consign'd.

Bern. He is not subject now to human laws;
The prison that awaits him is the grave.

1*st Off.* Ha! say'st thou so? there is foul play in this.

Man. (*to* Off.) Hold thy unrighteous tongue, or hie thee hence,
Nor, in the presence of this honour'd dame,
Utter the slightest meaning of reproach.

1*st Off.* I am an officer on duty call'd,
And have authority to say, "How died he?"

(*Here* Jane *shakes off the weakness of grief, and repressing* Manuel, *who is about to reply to the* Officer, *steps forward with dignity.*)

Jane. Tell them by whose authority you come,
He died that death which best becomes a man
Who is with keenest sense of conscious ill
And deep remorse assail'd, a wounded spirit:
A death that kills the noble and the brave,
And only them. He had no other wound.

1*st Off.* And shall I trust to this?

Jane. Do as thou wilt:
To one who can suspect my simple word
I have no more reply. Fulfil thine office.

1*st Off.* No, Lady, I believe your honour'd word,
And will no further search.

Jane. I thank your courtesy: thanks, thanks to all;
My rev'rend mother, and ye honour'd maids;
Ye holy men, and you, my faithful friends;
The blessing of the afflicted rest with you!
And He, who to the wretched is most piteous,
Will recompense you.—Freberg, thou art good;
Remove the body of the friend you lov'd:
'Tis Reżenvelt I mean. Take thou this charge:
'Tis meet, that with his noble ancestors
He lie entomb'd in honourable state.
And now I have a sad request to make,
Nor will these holy sisters scorn my boon;
That I, within these sacred cloister walls,
May raise a humble, nameless tomb to him,

Who, but for one dark passion, one dire deed,
Had claim'd a record of as noble worth,
As e'er enrich'd the sculptur'd pedestal.

[EXEUNT.

Note. — The last three lines of the last speech are not intended to give the reader a true character of *De Monfort*, whom I have endeavoured to represent throughout the Play as, notwithstanding his other good qualities, proud, suspicious, and susceptible of envy, but only to express the partial sentiments of an affectionate sister, naturally more inclined to praise him from the misfortune into which he had fallen.

☞ *The Tragedy of* DE MONFORT *has been brought out at Drury-Lane Theatre, adapted to the stage by* Mr. Kemble. *I am infinitely obliged to that Gentleman for the excellent powers he has exerted, assisted by the incomparable talents of his sister,* Mrs. Siddons, *in endeavouring to obtain for it that publick favour, which I sincerely wish it had been found more worthy of receiving.*

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.